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UNIPOLARITY AND WEAK STATES: THE CASE OF BANGLADESH

Air Commodore Mahmud Hussain, ndc, psc



Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies

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Papers

Number 23

February 2009



**Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies
Dhaka, Bangladesh**

biiss papers

Number 23, February 2009

Published by

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies
Dhaka, Bangladesh

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Price

Taka 100.00/US\$10.00 (air mail charge extra)

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Website: <http://www.biiss.org>

Printed by

Asiatic Civil Military Press

43/10 C, Swamibagh, Dhaka-1000

Tel.: 7120428, 9554613; Fax: 880-2-9667359

E-mail: asiatic@bangla.net

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BANGLADESH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

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Abstract

The end of the Cold War and disintegration of the Soviet Union around 1990 heralded the collapse of the bipolar system in international power politics. The demise of the Soviet threat has left the United States as the world's only superpower by placing it in a new strategic primacy. The current US grand strategy is designed to preserve that primacy in international scene by preventing the emergence of a global competitor. This phenomenon of assuming sole leadership role in world politics is defined as UNIPOLARITY. Unipolarity has engendered a singularly most complex dynamic in shaping the world events. The geo-strategic interests of the United States in exerting its influence spread across all the corners of the globe. The mechanisms of Globalization and New World Order under-gird a new dimension to the superpower role of the United States. South Asia, being a significant regional entity, invites an enduring and abiding focus of US policy options. It is home to world's one-fifth population. Being the lone superpower, the United States cannot remain indifferent to the emerging trends of political, military and economic changes in the region. Historically, US strategy in the region has been varied and nebulous. Its policy has shifted and alternated favours and disfavours to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh under different circumstances with varying degrees of response. The influence of other extra-regional powers, particularly Russia and China, undercuts US's interests and strategic equation. The key to understanding US strategic motive in South Asia under unipolarity lies in examining US strategic, political and economic concerns over issues as multi-dimensional as terrorism, poverty, religious fundamentalism, nuclearization, democracy, energy, human-rights, military co-operation, economic assistance and so on. This research paper deals with the implications of US policy for small states with special reference to Bangladesh. The US-Bangladesh relationship under unipolar regime is examined in detail. Finally, the paper recommends policy options for Bangladesh. While doing so, regional consideration of mutual co-existence and prosperity within the framework of SAARC is also deliberated upon.

1. INTRODUCTION

"The United States has turned into a unipolar global power without historical precedent. The 1990s surprised the world. Many observers expected the end of the Cold War to usher in a multipolar order with increasingly equal centers of power in Asia, Europe, and America. Instead, the United States began the decade as the world's only superpower and proceeded to grow more powerful at the expense of the other major states."

----- G. John Ikenberry in *Strategic Reactions to American Preeminence: Great Power Politics in the Age of Unipolarity* (28 July 2003).

The twenty first century began with a unipolar world order. The United States was the only power that had no rival, and since then, it has continued to be so in the international system. Its global primacy in terms of military, economic, technological, cultural and political capabilities is a reality of our age. Never before a country has been so powerful in history. According to Charles Krauthammer, a period in history which began as a "unipolar moment has become the unipolar era."¹ Hubert Vedrine defines the United States as "Hyperpower", a new term that he thinks best describes "a country that is dominant or predominant in all categories." Superpower, in his view, was a Cold War word; it reflected military capabilities of both the United States and the Soviet Union. Now the breadth of American power is unique, extending beyond economics, technology and military strength to "this domination of attitudes, concepts, language and modes of life."²

Unipolarity places weak states in a typically ambivalent situation different than what it was during bipolar world. Weak states then aligned themselves with either of the superpowers. But under unipolar system, a weak state has no such choice of alignment. Whether a weak state is vulnerable to hyperpower's policy actions will depend on a number of issues, such as its geographic location, locus standi in the comity of nations and domestic cohesion. What is more significant is that a weak state cannot but be sensitive to impressions made of it by the hyperpower. It may be recalled that even when non-aligned countries had formed their corporate alliance, it did not have much impact on neutralizing superpowers' sway over world politics. This proved that in the Cold War period, the role of the Third World was of little consequence in power politics. So, the realist faith in the material distribution of power capabilities is the defining determinant in deciding about the nature of inter-state relationship under any given situation. Because of concentration of power in a single state, the weak states have to construct reality through the lens of a subaltern. This representation of difference in post-modernist epistemology is extremely important because it builds and rationalizes images of power-control relationship on which modern political scientists base their cognitive interpretation of unipolar systemic process. The examination of unipolarity vis-à-vis weak states presents a landscape of the world constituting states whom the United States wants to transform, and in the process also wills to underwrite a transformed reality of global politics.

¹ Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment Revisited," in *The National Interest* (Winter 2002/03), p 17.

² Hubert Vedrine, "To Paris, US Looks Like a Hyperpower," in *International Herald Tribune*, February 5, 1999.

This paper has four sections except the Introduction and Conclusion. The first section provides an overview of the relationship between a hyperpower and weak states. It is a theoretical discourse that conceptualizes the phenomenon based on facts. There is a pressure on weak states to conform to the shifting dynamics of globalization whose principal actor is the United States. The second section outlines the significant features of US-Bangladesh relations. How the United States as a superpower has influenced the foreign policy of Bangladesh is discussed here. Section three suggests options for Bangladesh in the unipolar world. It focuses on developing short-term and long-term strategies. The last Section stresses the importance of regional forum in building a cooperative mechanism. It argues for the constructive role that Bangladesh can play toward making an enduring quest for regional cooperation and security in a unipolar world.

2. WEAK STATES AND UNIPOLARITY

Prime Minister Trudeau once said that, for Canada, being America's neighbour "is in some ways like sleeping with an elephant. No matter how friendly or even tempered is the beast ... one is affected by every twitch and grunt."

----- Quoted in "Theory of International Politics" by Kenneth

N. Waltz.

This section first examines the criteria that define a weak state. Then it analyses the concerns facing a weak state in international system. The next part explains the security imperative of a weak state. Thereafter, an understanding of the impact of globalization upon weak states under unipolarity is examined. The final part demonstrates the hegemonic condition under which mutual cooperation between a hegemon and a weak state is advantageous.

2.1. Perspectives on a Weak State

The behaviour of states in international system is largely determined by the power relations and differentials among them. The traditional theories of international relations take into account the unequal distribution of power among states in order of gradations based on material capabilities. Michael Handel categorizes states into five gradations. These are: super powers, great powers, middle powers, weak states and mini-states. According to him, "the main characteristic of weak states is, indeed, their lack of power or strength, and hence they are continuously preoccupied with the question of survival."³ Though it is problematic to define states, as per exact requirement of factors,

³ Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System*, (Frank Cass & CO. Ltd: USA, 1990), pp 9-65.

yet it is possible to formulate workable criteria of their gradations. For convenience, we may depict a hierarchical continuum, as suggested by Handel, to simplify our understanding of notions about states.

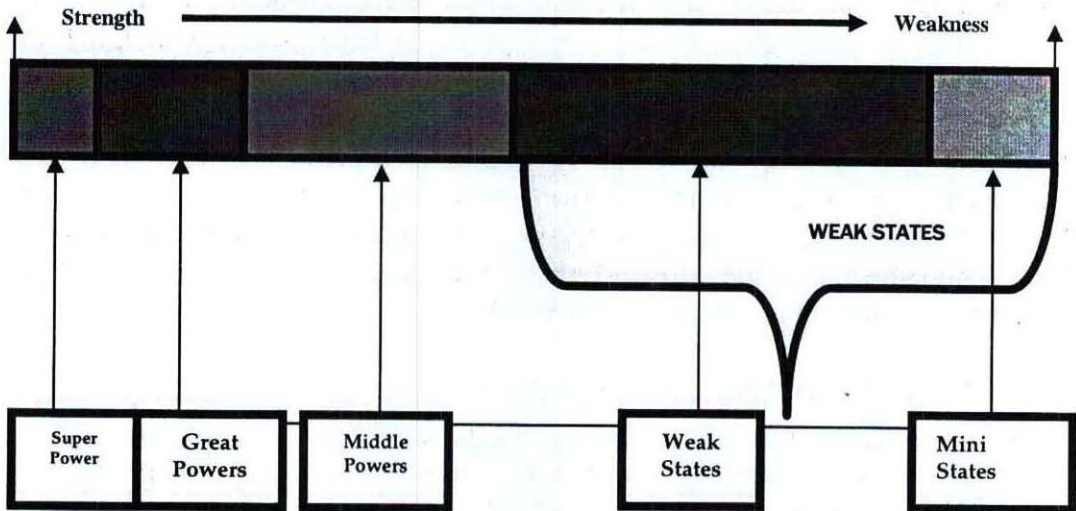


Figure: The Hierarchy of States in International System

So, we find that it is better to combine both weak states and mini-states in the category of “Weak States”. There is a semantic problem in connecting these terms with the notion of small power, which appears frequently in the literature of international politics. Handel, for correct reasons, does not consider “small power” and “small state” to be the same. In international relations, the *size* of a state does not matter, but rather its *relative strength*. A small state should be small in area. So, Handel recommends that the extension of small state notion to Democratic Republic of Congo, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Mongolia, Mauritania etc., is faulty. On the other hand, Israel is small in size but cannot be called weak. To him, the term “small state” should be used for those states that lack both strength and territorial largeness. A clear comparison between small state and weak state is of great significance from becoming a prey to linguistic aberration. So, Handel says that the term “weak state should be applied not only to small, weak states but to countries of considerable area which are, nevertheless, weak and therefore vulnerable.”⁴

The weak states form the largest group in the international system.⁵ There is another criterion that is important in recognizing weak states. It is their military strength. They usually have difficulty in defending themselves against

⁴ *Ibid*, pp 10-11.

⁵ *Ibid*, p 30.

great or middle powers. But between weak states, the enormous gap in power does not exist. As such, a weak state is able to defend itself against another weak state.⁶

Since no single definition of weak state is holistic and comprehensive, it is better to identify certain significant features that would be useful in comprehending the inner dynamics of the behavioural pattern of a weak state.

2.1.1. Military Power

Most weak states, by their very nature, must depend on external sources to deal with threat. They usually join alliance with great powers. Because of their lack of sophisticated weaponry, their military doctrine purportedly lacks offensive capabilities. This extreme reliance on defensive measures makes them innovate ways for fighting non-conventional warfare. During Vietnam War, despite American tactical successes, it lost the war strategically to Vietnam. External help to Vietnam was given by the erstwhile Soviet Union and China.⁷

Weak states generally do not have a viable military-industrial base. Therefore, they depend on outside sources for provision of armament and logistics. This makes them vulnerable to protracted war. However, they may be capable of harnessing strong mobilization in times of war.⁸ Lack of Research and Development in industrial sector makes them depend on outdated and archaic instruments of war. Weak states are hardly influenced by organizational, professional and doctrinal Revolutions in Military Affairs (RMAs).

2.1.2. Economic Power

Weak states generally have small population and area. But size and population may not be the sole criteria for such distinction. Bangladesh is a weak state despite having a large population. Weakness is a product of relative strength both militarily and economically.

Weak states have small domestic markets; as such, they depend on foreign markets for imports and exports. For economic growth, their high dependence on foreign capital renders them vulnerable to external influences.

⁶ *Ibid*, p 37.

⁷ John Shy and Thomas W. Collier, "Revolutionary War," in *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, Britain, 1994), pp 815-862.

⁸ Stephanie G. Neuman, "International Relations Theory and the Third World: An Oxymoron?" in *International Relations Theory and the Third World*, (Macmillan Press Ltd: London, 1998), pp 1-29.

Weak states represent small GNP in *absolute* terms. Many of these countries have GNP, merely comparable in size to leading Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) of the world. Absence of heavy industry makes them specialize in a narrow range of products. Economic vulnerability is a threat to their national security more than their military weakness can be subjected to the vagaries of international political events.⁹

2.1.3. *International System*

Weak states have little or no influence on the nature of international system. What is important for the weak states is to be aware of its dynamics. For example, the intensity of conflict between the major powers in a bipolar system determines whether it is a tight or a loose bipolar system. The position of the weak states is different in each case.¹⁰

Weak states are mainly passive or reactive to the events of international politics. They would manoeuvre to minimize risks to national security vis-à-vis higher powers. Usually, they become "client states" to some big power. Francis Fukuyama draws on the Hegelian dialectic of *Master-Slave* metaphor in inter-state behaviour.¹¹ In cost-benefit terms, the client extracts profits in return for the allegiance given to the patron.

Weak states can form alliances. But they are generally of ad-hoc kind. Any combination of weak states does not mean a counter-force to strong power. In fact, an alliance of weak states is a poor instrument if the goal is to increase military strength, or of limited utility if the goal is to reap economic benefits.¹²

Weak states display strong support for international law and norms of international organization. Their foreign policy is usually motivated by liberalist principles. They make up for their physical strength by moral

⁹ Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System*, pp 48-54; Robert Gilpin, "Economic Interdependence and National Security in Historical Perspective," in *Economic Issues and National Security*, edited by Klaus Knorr and Frank N. Trager, (University Press of Kansas: USA, 1982).

¹⁰ Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System*, pp 169-216; Morton A. Kaplan, *System and Process in International Politics*, (John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York, USA, 1967), pp 36-45.

¹¹ T.Z. Layne, *From Socrates to Sartre: the Philosophic Quest*, (Bantam Books: United States, 1989), pp 214-225; Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (The Free Press: USA, 1998), pp 192-208;

¹² Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System*, pp 153-156.

sentiments. Higher standard of moral conviction in international politics is what gives weak states a strong voice.¹³

Different types of international systems call for different types of behaviour by the weak states. The systems which have governed international politics in past few centuries have been mainly Balance of Power and Bipolar Systems. In Balance of Power system, weak states have the freedom to choose the alignment with any country. In Bipolar system, weak states have little or no freedom, and are clearly included in the grouping of either of the two great or superpowers. The situation in Balance of Power system is called a competitive system for the weak state while that in the Bipolar system is referred to as hegemonial.¹⁴

The behaviour of weak states in a unipolar system is different from either Balance of Power or Bipolar Systems. The system is highly regulated and, in a sense, hegemonial similar to bipolar system with the exception that now it is a single hegemon instead of two.

2.2. The Security of Weak States

In a unipolar system, counterbalance to hyper power is nearly impossible. Weak states, therefore, need to worry about their actions that are contrary to the interests of the United States. Managing political challenges presented by the United States may pose a formidable task for a weak state and will have profound implications for its actions as an independent actor.¹⁵ One of the fundamental postulates about the relationship between the United States and the position of a weak state is the extent to which America provides opportunities to protect its security and economic concerns.

The nature of the weak states' security dilemma in a unipolar world rests upon a number of complex factors. Briefly these factors can be explained as below:

¹³ E.H.Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939* (The Macmillan Press Ltd: Hong Kong, 1983), pp 146-169.

¹⁴ Michael Handel, *Weak States in International System*, pp 171- 175; Morton A. Kaplan, *System and Process in International Politics*, pp 113-125.

¹⁵ Max Singer, *The Real World Order, Zones of Peace / Zones of Turmoil*, (Chatham House Publishers: USA, 1993); see also, for greater understanding of security of small states when used as a tool for enhancing power concentration as happened during the bipolar regime, Mr Guo Jing'Am's, "Ways and Means to Promote Peace and Development and Safeguard the Security of Small States," a paper presented at BIIS, 6-8 January 1987, pp 1-3 and; Professor Talukder Maniruzzaman's *The Security of Small States in the Third World*, (Academic Publishers: Dhaka, 1989), pp 51-54.

1. The key to understanding US politics in relation to weak states is the concept of American *interest* defined in terms of *power*.¹⁶ Power may be exercised in the interest of political and economic gains. Iraqi invasion of Kuwait presented no military threat to the United States. But it defended Kuwait by defeating Iraqi invasion because the survival of a small state meant upholding America's economic power contained in the control of oil. So, if the *interest* of America coincides with the protection of weak states for economic aspirations, such as in the case of oil-rich Gulf states, it is likely that weak states will be secure under the umbrella of US collective security measures. This also explains for the increased US military presence in the Middle East in recent times.

2. The intent and nature of American power will vary in time and place. It will be governed again by its *interest*. American current support to Pakistan, even if considered small to India barring its nuclear capability, is based on its core interest to fight *global terrorism*. Yet America may be indifferent to the significance of weak states in a particular region. This might encourage regional powers to deal abrasively with their non-conformist weak neighbours and cause serious security and economic hurdles. Nepal's treatment in the hands of India remains largely unheeded by the United States. Regional powers meddling obtrusively with weak states are a serious issue for the domestic stability of the latter.¹⁷ Compare the protection afforded by the United States in time-place contextual exigency to small states like Israel and Taiwan.

3. Weak states professing *Islamisation* may face serious threats from America and its allies. Degree of threat depends on the avowed declaration of Islamist intentions in radicalizing social and political mores of the weak states. Coinage of terms such as 'moderate Muslim state', 'fundamental Muslim state' will invariably affect US policy actions against the weak Muslim states. Fundamental Islam is seen as a source of nuclear proliferation, terrorism and unwarranted migration. In this case, America will be a major actor in the

¹⁶ America's excessive practical attachment to physical demonstration of power is rooted in its historical past following the Second World War. Looking at American foreign policy, one must be surprised to note that no other country has so much been influenced by the theories of its academic scholars and their formulation of policies in international relations as America. The core concept of power belongs to *Realism*. Realism, in all its variants, having been the dominant theory of world politics in America, has become the core issue in its foreign policy dictum.

¹⁷ See the papers on seminar held at BISS, "Security of Small States in the Contemporary World," by Mr Farooq Sobhan, and; "The Security of Small States in the Contemporary World," by Brigadier A Mannaf, BISS, Dhaka, 1979.

conflict between Islam and the West.¹⁸ Countries like Iran, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Sudan may have to live under perpetual apprehension of US resentment.

4. Many Third World countries with the potential of nuclear capability pose a prime threat to US national interests. These states increase the risk that their nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of sub-national or terrorist groups. Thus, weak states trying to develop relationship with the suspect Third World nuclear countries will face severe constraints in economic and moral assistance from the United States. Pakistan faced such embarrassing dilemma when its top scientist Abdul Quader Khan was forced to accept humiliation and guilt of selling nuclear technology to Iran.

5. America's behaviour towards weak states will be dictated by its notion of self prestige.¹⁹ As Machiavelli states, 'nothing gives a prince more prestige than undertaking great enterprises and setting a splendid example for his people'.²⁰ Prestige-motivated actions are heavily dependent upon behavioural norms set by perceptions of power amongst the citizens. The more powerful a nation is the more sensitive its people and government will be in pursuit of fulfilling the desire for prestige. In a unipolar world, America as the lone superpower has universalized its prestige as an end to its policy options. 'For a weak state to be either in the US camp or face the consequences of its wrath' virtually denudes the weak state of its privilege of legal independence.

6. The issue of weak state developing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) is of utmost concern to the United States. The United States may put overwhelming pressures on the weak state to dismantle its nuclear capability. It could lead the hyperpower to disengage itself from its earlier military and economic commitments. Obedience to nuclear non-proliferation regime becomes pre-eminent US scrutiny of Third World behaviour.

Therefore, with the benefit of above factors, we find that the political influence of the United States in the present 'Unipolar Era' is autonomous from every angle - whether military, economic or moral value - as regards the security of weak states. If mutual rivalry between the United States and the erstwhile Soviet Union accounted for the weak states' plea for justice, support and flexible response, the end of bipolarity casts a different controlling

¹⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (Simon and Shuster: Great Britain, 1997), pp 207-218.

¹⁹ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations, The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (Kalyani Publishers: New Delhi, India, 2001), pp 94 – 100; Morgenthau says, "The policy of prestige has two possible ultimate objectives: prestige for its own sake, or much more frequently, prestige in support of the status quo or of imperialism." In fact, the idea of prestige in international politics is as old as Thucydides (The History of Peloponnesian War).

²⁰ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, (A Norton Critical Edition: USA, 1992), p 60.

mechanism in present world order. The foregoing paragraphs clearly demonstrate that in a unipolar system, absence of a countervailing superpower has rendered the security of weak states problematic. How that trauma posits itself in the unipolar system makes the case of weak states very sensitive and volatile. This is clear from the following:

The Melian Trauma

MELIANS: It is natural and understandable that people who are placed as we are should have recourse to all kinds of arguments and different points of view. However, you are right in saying that we are met together here to discuss the safety of our country and, if you will have it so, the discussion shall proceed on the lines that you have laid down.

ATHENIANS: Then we on our side will use no fine phrases saying, for example, that we have a right to our empire because we defeated the Persians, or that we have come against you now because of the injuries you have done us --- a great mass of words that nobody would believe. And we ask you on your side not to imagine that you will influence us by saying that you, though a colony of Sparta, have not joined Sparta in the war, or that you have never done us any harm. Instead we recommend that you should try to get what is possible for you to get, taking into consideration what we both really do think; since you know as well as we do that, when these matters are discussed by practical people, the standard of justice depends on the equality of power to compel and *that in fact the strong do what they have power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept.*²¹

The "Melian Dialogue" representing Thucydean morality still holds good in international affairs. The debate presents the security of weak states as an ambiguous symbol. This clearly points to the fact that the security of weak states rises or falls with their ability to accord to the goals of great powers. In that sense, security is a subjective matter for a weak state that can have lesser or greater measure of it as determined by external forces. Power and wealth, the two factors of great importance in international affairs, are of positive values. Their worth lies in having possession of material means of controlling physical assets and others' actions.²² Both these factors are palpable in the sense that they are plausible manifestation of a nation's capability. On the other hand, the value of security is negative. In subjective sense, it measures a nation's fear from threat of others. As the power and wealth of opponent increase, so does the fear from security moves up the scale. During the Cold

²¹ Thucydides, "The Melian Dialogue," as quoted in *Classics of International Relations*, edited by John A. Vasquez, (Prentice Hall: United States, 1996), p 10.

²² Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration*, (The John Hopkins Press: USA, 1991), pp 147-165.

War, the United States and the Soviet Union both had power and wealth. But they suffered from grievous feeling of insecurity from each other. In the context of a great power and a weak state, the latter's security perception can range from a sense of complete insecurity to a sense of uncanny fear.

In unipolarity, all powers are concentrated into the United States. The famous Monroe Doctrine was formulated to isolate the Central American countries from the influence of European powers.²³ The same position pertains under current unipolarity. This is clearly evident from US ability to prevent any other great power from exercising its control in the Middle East. Even when a weak state which wants to enjoy freedom of manoeuvre against the will of the hyperpower must act with great caution with some explicit support from other great powers. Iran's traumatic ability to continue nuclear programme against US threats is due to tacit approbation from Russia and China. Yet these great powers are not likely to join in an anti-American countervailing rhetoric for fear of whipping up hostile reactions from the United States. However, the ability of hyper power to muster support on moral grounds can be unparalleled. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, the act did not go scot-free because the leadership role of the United States was exemplary. There is no doubt that without the support of the United States, the history of Bosnia would have been different.

These examples indicate that the United States has the ability to transform a prevailing situation. Whether American intervention in the Third World countries would in the long run be beneficial to host countries is a challenge for them. *The weak states accept what they have to accept* may turn out to be deleterious to their sovereign status. This is not to say that American influence is always deprecating to others. American power is complex and countries experience American unipolar power in different ways. A threat to some is opportunity to others.²⁴ For example, Saudi Arabia finds American security role in the Middle East more useful to it, while Iraq finds that role to be troubling.

The increase in American power relative to other great powers induces fear among weak states in absence of an alternative power. This fear has two sides. One is positive and the other, negative. The positive side is augmentative to a weak state's security structure while the negative side is threatening to its security. Even when a weak state feels secure under the influence of the United States, there is a restraint on its actions. It may try to

²³ Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System*, pp 171-175.

²⁴ G. John Ikenberry, "Strategic Reactions to American Preeminence: Great Power Politics in the Age of Unipolarity," 28 July 2003, a paper presented to the National Intelligence Council, USA.

loosen the American grip but with little success. Iraq and Afghanistan are the recent examples of what 'America does what it has power to do and both accept what both have to accept'. But can 'Melian Trauma' on the part of the majority of world's sovereign states be transformed into collective good?

Great powers contrive international order. Current unipolar system is the ruling of the United States. Never in history a nation has enjoyed so much of power and never in history have the leaders of a nation expressed such overweening ambitions. To promote a true unipolar system for the first time in history is one of US's grandiose projects. In reinforcing that system, the United States must create an international security order, and that order becomes invigorating when it gives expressions to its political aspirations for the world. The first step towards that arrangement is the promotion of its economic interests whose operational manifestation is globalization. The contemporary economic world order makes the weak states ever more dependent on the West whose leading protagonist is the United States. How does America underwrite globalization constitutes a major institutional framework of unipolar system.

2.3. Globalization and Weak States

Here we shall relate the weak state perspective to the US-led globalization process with the help of a theoretical construct.

Unipolarity favours hyperpower's leadership role and removes the problem of hegemonic rivalry among great powers from world politics. This, in turn, reduces the possibility of war among the great powers. As a result, the hyperpower is able to create hegemonic leadership which is not antithetical to stability. Hegemonic leadership can help to create a pattern of order in international system. In international relations, it is called theory of *Hegemonic Stability*.²⁵ The hegemonic leader chooses to enforce a set of neo-liberal rules, and the international system is characterized by monetary and exchange stability, free trade, and a high potential for economic growth.²⁶ This forward looking strategy adopted by the hegemonic leader develops into a universal governance of globalization with diverse ramifications to weak states.

²⁵ Robert O. Keohane, "The Theory of Hegemonic Stability and Changes in International Regimes, 1967-1977," in *International Political Economy* edited by C.Roe Goddard, John T Passe-Smith and John G. Conklin, (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., USA, 1996), pp 89-108.

²⁶ Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony*, (Longman: USA, 2001), pp 32-64; Robert Gilpin, *Global Political Economy*, (Orient Longman Private Limited: India, 2003), pp 77-102; Jan Art Scholte, *Globalisation*, pp 132-157.

The theory of hegemonic stability has been developed and expanded by a number of notable scholars, such as Robert Keohane, Immanuel Wallerstein, Charles Kindleberger, Robert Gilpin and Stephen Krasner.²⁷ According to them, strong international economic regime, which is the basis of globalization, depends on hegemonic power. Concentration of power in the hegemon contributes to stability, while its fragmentation among competing countries leads to discord. A hegemon has the capabilities to establish rules for international economic regimes. It may even use coercion to enforce adherence to rules. On the other hand, it may also provide for benefits to those who cooperate; this is particularly beneficial to weak states that cooperate as a motive for receiving incentives. The faith in mutual cooperation between the hegemon and the rest is the basis for collective good. For example, the benefit of stable money can be exploited by all participants without diminishing from others' enjoyment. If this is the case, it is inevitable that hegemonic leadership must depend on a certain degree of asymmetrical cooperation, which a hegemon must support and maintain. This commitment on the part of hegemon should benefit a weak state because it can reap greater benefits out of the cooperation extended to the hegemon. According to Robert Keohane, "... relatively small participants will attempt to secure 'free rides' by avoiding proportionate shares of payment."²⁸ This is an advantage for weak states in a unipolar globalized system.

However, there are disadvantages also in acting according to the prescriptions of global institutions. Global economic governance is reflected in the policies of the Bretton Woods organizations. IMF and World Bank are known to have intervened into state-sponsored measures with conditionality that has produced effects contrary to what was expected. The East Asian financial crisis of 1997 is one such example.²⁹ These institutions have also stepped into state sovereignty by mandating changes in the state and economic policies of a country.

Thus, an America-centered globalization is not without limitations.³⁰ For theory of hegemonic stability to prove the test of time, the unipolar hegemon must take into account the realities in terms of their persistence. America has

²⁷ Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony*; Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World Economy: Essays by Immanuel Wallerstein*, (Cambridge University Press: New York, 1979) pp 66-93; Robert Gilpin, *Global Political Economy*, pp 77-102.

²⁸ Robert O. Keohane, "The Theory of Hegemonic Stability and Changes in International Regimes, 1967-1977," p 91.

²⁹ Joseph Stiglitz, *Globalisation and its Discontent*, (Penguin Books: India, 2003), p 231.

³⁰ Richard Langhorne, *The Coming of Globalisation*, (Palgrave: Great Britain, 2001), pp 67-131; Stephen Gill, *Power and Resistance in the New World Order*, (Palgrave: Great Britain, 2003), pp 73-92.

to accept the fact that other great powers will continue efforts to rise as a counter to American supremacy. Globalization is a means by which the United States can build the mechanism of sustained unipolarity. Majority of global sovereignties are weak states. The future of unipolarity thus lies in bringing these states into the fold of globalization with spontaneous acquiescence. For weak states, conceding to unipolar leadership as distinct from either bipolar or multipolar leadership is largely a task for statesmen of the United States and the Third World to build on the positive forces of hegemonic leadership in the creation of a new and more stable international order.

In that kind of atmosphere, America needs to put on the mantle of a myth called 'Post-modern Prince' by Antonio Gramsci. America and the rest of the world with its complex set of institutional organisms may create conditions for sustained optimism in globalization. That optimism will be based on diversity and opportunities for the Third World. As a result, unipolarity should embody common ideals, the persuasion of which follows from an instinct for cooperation and harmony between the leader and the led.³¹

2.4. Hegemonic Cooperation

Game theory is an important tool in explaining the significance of hegemonic cooperation in international politics.³² The simplest form of game theoretic model is called "Prisoners' Dilemma". It is best explained by the story from which it derives its name and can be the starting point for understanding the rationality of actors' behaviour.

The name of the Prisoner's Dilemma is derived from the following situation. Suppose that the police have arrested two people. Police know that they have committed an armed robbery together. However, they lack enough admissible evidence to convince a jury to convict the robbers. But they have enough evidence to send each prisoner to jail for two years for theft.

The chief inspector now makes the following offer to each prisoner. If you will confess to the robbery but implicate your partner also, while your partner does not confess, then you will go free and he will get ten years. If you both confess, you will each get five years. If neither of you confess, you will each get two years for the theft.

³¹ Martin Weber, "Engaging Globalisation: Critical Theory and Global Political Change," in *Alternatives* 27 (2002), 301-325.

³² Game Theory, as a branch of Rational Choice Theory (RCT), has accomplished excellent results in international politics. Some of the seminal works in this field are: John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern's *Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour*, Kenneth Arrow's *Social Choice and Individual Values*, Mancur Olson's *Logic of Collective Action* and Amartya Sen's *Rationality and Freedom*.

Our first step in modeling the situation as a game is to represent it in terms of utility functions. A utility function is a device for thinking of maximizing gains in mathematical terms. Both prisoner's (here partners) utility functions are identical:

Go Free >> 4

2 years >> 3

5 years >> 2

10 years >> 0

The numbers in the function are now used to express the prisoners *payoff*. A payoff is the objective, usually a numerical, that the player in a game aims to maximize. We will refer the prisoners as Prisoner A and Prisoner B. Now we can represent their entire situation in a matrix. This is a strategic form of game. The strategies in this case are: cooperate or don't cooperate between the prisoners. The payoffs are the penalties served in terms of sentences in jail.

		Prisoner B	
		Cooperate	Don't Cooperate
Prisoner A	Cooperate	3 (2 yrs), 3 (2 yrs)	0 (10 yrs), 4 (0 yrs)
	Don't Cooperate	4 (0 yrs), 0 (10 yrs)	2 (5 yrs), 2 (5 yrs)

Each cell of the matrix gives the payoffs to both prisoners for each combination of actions. Prisoner A's payoff appears as the first number of each player; Prisoner B's as the second. So, if both of them cooperate between themselves, that is, both do not confess to the Chief Inspector that each has committed robbery, each will get a payoff of 3, that is, 2 years in prison. This appears in the upper left cell. If they do not cooperate between themselves, that is, both confess to the Chief Inspector that each has committed robbery, each will get a payoff of 2, that is, 5 years in prison. This appears in the lower right cell. If Prisoner A cooperates with his partner, that is, he does not confess to the Chief Inspector that he has committed robbery, but his partner does not cooperate with him, that is, he confesses to the Chief Inspector that both have committed robbery, then Prisoner A will get a payoff of 0, that is, ten years in prison, while Prisoner B gets a payoff of 4, that is, going free. This appears in the upper right cell. The reverse situation appears in the lower left cell, in which Prisoner B cooperates with Prisoner A, that is, he does not confess to the Chief Inspector that both have committed robbery but Prisoner A does not cooperate with him, that is, he confesses to the Chief Inspector that he has committed robbery. Here, Prisoner A will get a payoff of 4, that is, going free, while his partner Prisoner B will get a pay off of 0, that is, ten years in prison.

Given these four options, the optimal one for them is to cooperate between themselves and get 2 years each (payoff 3). But in the example of prisoners'

dilemma, the prisoners are not allowed to consult with each other and are not sure of what the other might do. Both are likely to be affected by a rational perception of doubt about other's decision. If each believes that the other is not going to cooperate, then he will get 10 years in jail by cooperating. Since none is sure about other's move, the compelling logic suggests that the prisoners would do better by not cooperating and thereby reconciling themselves to 5 years in jail. This may not confer upon them the mutual advantage of the least jail term of 2 years; but this would obviously save them from 10 years near certainty. Here, non-cooperation by both prisoners is a manifestation of their mutual distrust under constraining circumstances.³³

Prisoners' Dilemma is usually seen as a way of informing the need for mutual cooperation in international politics. The standard example of Prisoners' Dilemma reiterates the provision that the reward for cooperation is greater than risking a chance of exploiting others. This is what Mancur Olson, Jr. explains as 'The Logic of Collective Action'. Both Prisoners' Dilemma and the promise of collective action have great heuristic value in unipolar regime. The actors in Prisoners' Dilemma can be extrapolated for the unipolar system itself (the police), the hegemon (one of the prisoners) and a non-hegemonic state (the other prisoner). Since the actions by the prisoners have the potential of ultimately evolving into mutual cooperation, if the barrier of mutual distrust as a constraining factor is removed, and so guide the decision of the police in awarding sentence, similarly behavioural patterns of the United States and related response from other states shape the hegemonic landscape of unipolarity.

There is a cognitive correlation between Prisoners' Dilemma and Unipolar Dilemma. Both point to the finding that mutual cooperation is the best option for obtaining the highest utility function of an event, thus becoming a preferred option for social adjustment. Mutual interests are sufficient to enable states to overcome their suspicions about the United States. Both Prisoners' Dilemma and Unipolar Dilemma arguments focus attention on issues of mutual trust, commitment and above all, strategic interaction. All these conditions are significant for creating mutually assured order for world politics. Perhaps even more important, Prisoners' Dilemma draws our attention to ways in which removal of barriers to communication and mistrust in the mind-set in world politics can create atmosphere of cooperation where common interests for payoffs exist.

³³ There is a massive and useful literature on Prisoners' Dilemma. I have primarily used the reading from Robert O. Keohane's *After Hegemony* (Chapter 5: Rational-Choice and Functional Explanations) to explain the subject with my own modifications.

If the United States is the chief architect of international economic and security regimes, these institutions also provide other states a bargaining power. The United States is preeminent but not omnipotent. Bargaining may involve an attempt by weaker states to use moral grounds to withhold legitimacy for an American action. Such collective denial of US actions comes hard upon its prestige and seriously injures its leadership profile. Governments of weak states can withdraw their moral support from the United States, if they discover that it is behaving unilaterally as opposed to the norms of international order it is expected to uphold.

The United States has a great capacity to influence how other states, particularly the weaker ones, respond to its unipolar power. The more the United States sincerely demonstrates that it intends to operate through mutually agreed rules and institutions, the more weak states will choose to engage rather than resist the United States. So, cooperation and hegemony are not to be considered as inconsistent with each other. This type of hegemonic leadership is premised upon liberal characteristics.³⁴ Its abiding tenet is strategic empathy of the hegemon as a shared commitment towards mutual cooperation. For weak states, there is a need for leadership at the global level. International system cannot exist in vacuum. But how that vacuum will be filled up and addressed also depends on the great power that should develop the capacity for reading the expectations of other states, particularly the weaker ones.

3. IMPLICATIONS OF UNIPOLARITY FOR BANGLADESH

"The United States admires Bangladesh as a nation proud of its Islamic heritage, proud of its unique culture, proud of its commitment to tolerance and democracy, and proud of its participation in the world community."

----- Bill Clinton, the 42nd President of the United States

Relations between a hyper power, the United States and a small power, Bangladesh, provide an interesting and complex dependence of a Third World country in its existence as a nation-state. It is a kind of strange relationship that vividly illustrates how strong a superpower can be in influencing the events of a small state. The very nature of relationship defines the *vulnerability* condition of Bangladesh to US policies and actions. But to determine that vulnerability as wholly negative would be a biased judgement.

One must be aware of examining US-Bangladesh relationship in its full spectrum. The vulnerability dimension of Bangladesh to US pressures must also be seen against the need of a small state to be *extremely sensitive* to a

³⁴ G. John Ikenberry, *Strategic Reactions to American Preeminence: Great Power Politics in the Age of Unipolarity*.

superpower's influence. The cost-benefit analysis, in terms of dependence, is the issue that determines in the end the political aspect of such relationship. While we may define *vulnerability* as a state's virtual incapability to act differently in the face of another state's asymmetrical power, sensitivity reflects the former's urgency to seek for the latter's support. When we are talking about asymmetrical power, we are, in fact, thinking of a power that is capable of affecting an outcome which is potentially binding upon a target state. The distinction is important. A state may not like the potential effects that may reside within its vulnerability weakness, but its sensitivity enables it to be responsive to the ground realities as they evolve.

In this section, firstly, I plan to briefly discuss the Bangladesh-US relations that have evolved over the past four decades. Secondly, a brief discussion of the three images --- the Statesman, the State and the International System --- will be important. These three images are the important elements in determining the behaviour of a state, particularly a superpower. Theory of International Relations posits them as invaluable for state behaviour. Such understanding will make it easier to understand the implications of US unipolarity for Bangladesh. Thirdly, what are the burdens of compellence under US hegemony for a country like Bangladesh will be discussed. This third part is a rational outflow of the second discussion.

3.1. From Estrangement to Convergence

Bangladesh was liberated on 16 December 1971 at the end of a nine-month long liberation war in the face of strong US resistance. US opposition was the result of its Cold War strategy of containment of communist expansion within the frontiers of the Soviet Union. In the 1970s, America needed a rapprochement with China to counter Soviet expansion in Asia. Pakistan was the instrument to realize US policy option. In July 1971, President Nixon's special envoy, Henry Kissinger, made a secret trip to Beijing with the assistance of Pakistan.³⁵ This policy obviously shaped US attitude towards the question of the birth of Bangladesh. When war broke out between India and Pakistan on 3 December 1971 over Bangladesh, it had serious global ramifications involving three big powers, namely the United States, the Soviet Union and China. It was natural that the United States and China sided with Pakistan, while the Soviet Union supported India in accordance with the provisions of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 9 August 1971.³⁶

³⁵ Sarbjit Sharma, *US-Bangladesh Relations: A Critique*, (UBS Publishers: New Delhi, India, 2001), pp 2-7; Lawrence Lifschultz, *Bangladesh: The Unfinished Revolution*, (Zed Press: London, 1979), pp 111-113.

³⁶ Sarbjit Sharma, p 16.

It is an irony that during the entire period of Bangladesh's liberation war, US foreign policy stood in sharp contradistinction to what the popular US sentiments were then. There was a significant support and wide-hearted sympathy amongst the US public and in the Congress for the Bengalis. The US President, Richard Nixon, and the Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, completely ignored these sentiments. They identified the liberation war with a movement for insurgency and held India responsible for inciting the so-called 'civil war'.³⁷

Kissinger even encouraged China to open a second front with India and assured that the United States would neutralize the Soviet Union if it made any attempt to support India. It was prepared to provide the Chinese with satellite pictures on Soviet forces across the Chinese border. It also encouraged the Middle Eastern countries to provide American arms to Pakistan in violation of US laws. But the most manifest anti-liberation act in the form of military overtures came when the United States moved its Seventh Fleet headed by the aircraft carrier 'Enterprise' into the Bay of Bengal to threaten India against supporting the Bengalis.³⁸

To the architect of US foreign policy, Kissinger, the birth of Bangladesh meant a deep personal defeat. He felt that the cause of Bangladesh was damaging and debilitating to the administration's China policy on which so much else rested for the *Realpolitik* of the United States. He considered Bangladesh an unnecessary irritant and intrusion in the process of US diplomatic schemes at the time. Clearly, the Nixon administration was not willing to grant recognition to Bangladesh to please China and Pakistan. But there was a wide-hearted sympathy and support for Bangladesh amongst the US public and in the Congress. The American press, too, demanded recognition. The strongest pressure came from the two staunch - Senators Adlai Stevenson and Edward Kennedy. On 21 March 1972, the US Senate unanimously approved a resolution calling for prompt US recognition of Bangladesh. The Nixon administration could not ignore these pressures.

³⁷ Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *Pakistan, India and the Creation of Bangladesh*, (University of California Press: USA, 1990), pp 191-196; Sarbjit Sharma, p 10: Here, the statement by Henry Kissinger, in respect of the 1971 crisis is worth noting which he considered to be a merely strong action against the civilians: "US could not condone a brutal military repression in which thousands of civilians were killed and millions fled to India for safety. There was no doubt about the strong-arm tactics of the Pak military. But Pakistan was our sole channel to China, once it was closed off, it would take months to make alternative arrangements."

³⁸ Sarbjit Sharma, pp 16-21; Aftab Alam, *US Policy towards South Asia*, (Raj Publications, Delhi, India, 1998), p 37; Lawrence Lifschultz, *Bangladesh: The Unfinished Revolution*, (Zed Press: London, 1997), pp 155-168.

Ultimately, on 4 April 1972, the United States accorded recognition to Bangladesh as an independent state.³⁹

Once recognition was accorded, the United States immediately backed it up by economic aid of \$ 90 million in May 1972 to Bangladesh, further augmented by another \$ 25 million in June 1972. Bangladesh's dire need for food was also met through US Food Aid programme PL-480. By March 1973, the United States had become the largest donor to Bangladesh.⁴⁰ But Bangladesh's close relations with India, the Soviet Union and other east-European countries coupled with frequent anti-American sentiment was an impediment to US influence. The United States wanted Bangladesh to directly align with the American bloc.⁴¹ In the Cold-War era, US policy objectives feared any Indo-Soviet influence over the small states of South Asia as a threat to containing communism.

US aid to Bangladesh must be seen in the context of strategic and economic goals of a super power. As a member of the Planning Commission, Rehman Sobhan remarked, "There was evidence of a major effort by the United States to use its food aid as a direct instrument for political pressure."⁴² The greatest pressure came in enormous price paid by Bangladesh when it tied its commerce with a communist country. In 1974, Bangladesh was suffering from shortage of dollar. So, it decided to export jute to Cuba because competition from Indian jute and low world market prices had drastically depleted its foreign exchange earnings. The United States pressurized Bangladesh that it cancel its trade with Cuba. Initially when Bangladesh showed reluctance for obvious economic security, the United States stopped all food supply to Bangladesh. The result was shortage of food and appearance of famine in Bangladesh which has been recorded as one of the most tragic events in modern history. After Bangladesh had given in and sacrificed its trade with Cuba, the United States resumed its food aid. By then, famine had cost twenty six thousand innocent lives.⁴³

³⁹ Lawrence Lifschultz, pp 103-113; Sarbjit Sharma, pp 32-37; Graham P. Chapman, *The Geopolitics of South Asia*, (Ashgate Publishing Limited: UK, 2003), pp 263-265.

⁴⁰ Brigadier General Shafaat Ahmad, "US-Bangladesh Relations," in *The Daily Star*, 28 September, 2006, p 16. Sarbjit Sharma, pp 37-40: US support to Bangladesh in the early years of independence was demonstrated by its massive economic assistance. By 30 June 1973, the United States had provided \$443 million of grant assistance to Bangladesh – roughly one-third of the total amount of foreign aid.

⁴¹ Sarbjit Sharma, pp 49-51.

⁴² Rehman Sobhan, "Politics of Food and Famine in Bangladesh," in *Economic and Political Weekly* (Bombay), 1 December 1979.

⁴³ Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines*, (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1981), pp 131-153.

Yet the circumstances of the formative years of Bangladesh were such that it was in its interest to lean towards the United States. Bangladesh was born as one of the poorest countries, with virtually no substantive infrastructure, less than 10% urbanization, and a largely illiterate peasantry.⁴⁴ In the face of recurring economic woes and natural calamities, Indo-Soviet aid was not enough to sustain the country. Drought in 1972 and floods in 1973 crippled the backbone of the government's credibility. Bangladesh had to seek US assistance which had, by now, become the largest donor of Bangladesh.⁴⁵ Apart from the need of US aid, there were other strong factors that led to the strengthening of US – Bangladesh relations. These could be categorized broadly under three themes; namely, financial, geo-political and geo-strategic.

First, as a new-born state, Bangladesh was in short supply of capital. Within a short period of time, it secured membership of several world financial bodies, such as IMF and World Bank. Compulsion to appease the US administration was so high that the government removed anti-American elements from the cabinet and promoted internal economic policies more tuned to the advice of the World Bank. Until 1975, the United States had loaned or granted \$500 million dollars to Bangladesh and supported its borrowings from the World Bank and International development Association. What is even remarkable of US support was the fact that despite strong opposition from certain powerful quarters of Bangladesh government and public, the US aid efforts were unwavering.⁴⁶ Whatever be the motive of American aid, the economic condition of Bangladesh was in such a state that no government could resist the United States' power of apparent altruism.

Second, geo-political developments within Bangladesh, following the independence years, were gradually tilting towards the United States. Bengali politics during Pakistan days was characterized by a strong leftist trend and there were a number of political parties that had prominent pro-Chinese elements in them.⁴⁷ These elements made strong issue of socio-economic deterioration in Bangladesh, and despite the hostile attitude of China towards Bangladesh's freedom movement, became quite active. This also led to a steady decline in India's popularity in Bangladesh. The elation in Indo-

⁴⁴ Graham P. Chapman, *The Geopolitics of South Asia*, p 268.

⁴⁵ Sarbjit Sharma, pp 49-51.

⁴⁶ Sarbjit Sharma, p 39, 42.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p 45-46. The pro-Chinese leader, Maulana Bhashani's popularity in Bangladesh was second to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib and as such, the Maulana displayed a reckonable force in national politics. He organized a six-party pro-Peking platform and gave a call for removal of the Bangabandhu government branded as 'a stooge of India and the USSR'. Another popular pro-Chinese politician Mohammad Toaha asked the Mujib government to steer the country out of its dependence upon India and the Soviet Union.

Bangladesh relations as a consequence of India's support to Bangladesh's independence, soon gave way to the emergence of strong nationalism in Bangladesh under the impact of psychic reverberations. India's big size and resources raised fears of hegemony in Bangladesh. Erosion of India's popularity created favourable conditions for China to modify its stand and give recognition to Bangladesh in 1974.⁴⁸ Moreover, anti-Indian sentiment also witnessed the resurgence of pro-Islamic forces in Bangladesh. These forces were responsible for bringing closer the two governments of Bangladesh and Pakistan by burying the past. Their success became apparent when Pakistan accorded recognition to Bangladesh on 22 February 1974.⁴⁹ The improved state of affairs in Sino-Bangladesh relations and normalization of Pakistan-Bangladesh ties suited well with US strategy which ceased to be an impediment to Bangladesh's continued existence.

Third, despite Bangladesh being at the periphery of America's choice, it merited America's close examination for its geo-strategic compulsions. For the United States, a stable Bangladesh meant a stable South Asia. America's broader policy goal in South Asia was to stem the hegemonic influence of Indo-Soviet nexus. Proximity of Bangladesh to the Indian Ocean made it attractive to US interests.

US-Bangladesh relations in the initial years of post-independent era as discussed above under the broad three categories, achieved the solidity of convergence, thereby breaking away from its short tenure of estrangement, in terms of political context with the end of an era. The 15 August 1975 military coup had a profound influence on Bangladesh's politics as well as on changing the US-Bangladesh relations for the future. It severed the United States from its past afflictions associated with its opposition to the freedom movement of Bangladesh. In fact, many credible literatures are available that point towards an invisible '*American Hand*' in that coup.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 45-47.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁵⁰ Sarbjit Sharma, *US-Bangladesh Relations: A Critique*, pp 58-62; Lawrence Lifschultz, *Bangladesh: The Unfinished Revolution*; pp 98-153; Some critics allege that Henry Kissinger could never forgive Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib for upsetting his plans for alignment with China in 1971. Moreover, after independence, the United States wanted to bring Bangladesh under its influence to stem Indo-Soviet influence. Hence, it maintained close connection with the pro-American group that led the coup. It also assured of substantial help to the new regime of coup stagers. On the basis of these insinuations, it is alleged that the US government had prior knowledge of the coup that killed Bangabandhu. There may be elements of truth in it. In conforming to the US strategic calculation, the post-Mujib rulers established full diplomatic relations with Pakistan, China and Saudi Arabia.

In the post-Bangabandhu era, marked by the Cold War from 1975 till 1989, US-Bangladesh relations continued to strengthen because of Bangladesh's economic vulnerability.

Zia's regime brought about significant developments in the relations which had previously remained cold. Bangladesh government took actions that helped the United States advance a positive relationship towards Bangladesh. Some of the major steps were: establishment of a pro-US regime; pursuit of friendship with China and Pakistan and dissociating from Indo-Soviet influence; echoing of US sentiments in the wake of Chinese invasion of Vietnam in December 1978; denunciation of Russian and Vietnamese intervention in Afghanistan and Cambodia respectively, thus supporting US stand on these issues; signing of Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) to which the United States attached special significance, thereby ensuring a strong bond in US-Bangladesh relationship; projection by the Bangladeshi Press of the United States as a friend of the new nation and at the same time, accusing the other superpower, the Soviet Union, for arming India posing a threat to Bangladesh. During this period, US-Bangladesh relations were frequently deliberated upon by the Congress, thus signifying the importance of Bangladesh in US's strategic calculation about the region. It may be argued if, in that period of Cold War, the United States was able to influence the events in South Asia, Bangladesh too was able to develop a close relationship with the United States through a two-pronged cooperation, namely, political and economic. This also meant that, due to practicalities on ground, Bangladesh could hardly avoid its dependence on the United States.⁵¹

The post-Zia era in Bangladesh witnessed a further deepening of its closeness with the United States. General Ershad even referred to the Soviets as "dangerous".⁵² He ordered the expulsion of the Soviet diplomats from Bangladesh and closure of the Soviet Cultural Center in 1983.⁵³ This move by Ershad naturally enamoured Bangladesh to the United States which was creating conditions for reducing the influence of Soviet Union as a superpower in international politics. There was a complete turning away of Bangladesh from Indo-Soviet axis. Some of the steps taken by the government meant that Bangladesh was moving further and further into the influence and ambit of the United States. These steps included: creation of a free-market economy; continued opposition to Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; support to US position in the United Nations on human rights in Central America and

⁵¹ Sarbjit Sharma, pp 58-73; Brigadier General Shafaat Ahmad, "US-Bangladesh Relations," in *The Daily Star*.

⁵² Ershad's interview in *New York Times*, 19 April 1982.

⁵³ Quoted in Sarbjit Sharma, p 77.

Poland, and US military intervention in Panama; sending of Bangladeshi troops to Iraq during Gulf War I under US leadership. The regime's stand on international issues converged with that of the United States. The ties which were started during Zia's time were further consolidated by Ershad to an extent that he not only followed World Bank and US prescriptions for privatization of economy, but also for political remedies.⁵⁴ Thus, we see that proselytisation of Bangladesh into US camp, was completed much before the end of the Cold War and the arrival of 'Unipolar World'.

The end of the Cold War and the apocalyptic transformation of Eastern Europe transformed the global leadership scenario. The United States transited from the position of superpower to that of hyperpower. This made for important implications for the Third World. Bangladesh was no exception. The fear of dominance by Indo-Soviet block was removed, and the prerogative of the United States in the affairs of Bangladesh became inevitable. With the return of pluralist democracy in Bangladesh in 1991, it moved even closer to America in search of economic and political cooperation. The United States has become one of the most vital trading partners of Bangladesh and currently it constitutes Bangladesh's biggest export market.⁵⁵ It is also the second largest bilateral aid donor after Japan.⁵⁶

The greatest recognition to US-Bangladesh relations by any American Head of State came when President Bill Clinton visited Bangladesh in 2000. Clinton made the visit despite warnings from his Secret Service about the presence of strong Al-Qaeda network in Bangladesh.⁵⁷ His visit gave a clear signal that Bangladesh was a country that needed to be judged on its own merit by the lone superpower in a unipolar milieu.

Though the incidents of 9/11 have changed the US security perceptions about the Muslim countries, it has not affected the usual supportive role of US foreign policy calculations about Bangladesh. In fact, Bangladesh's attitude towards global terrorism and its earnestness and success in neutralizing religious extremist groups in recent times have strengthened its positive image to the US government. For years, the United States has experienced moderate Islamic states becoming a breeding ground of extremism. Bangladesh's genuine initiative in counter-terrorism represents a progressive tendency for world peace and stability.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, pp 73-79.

⁵⁵ Brigadier General Shafaat Ahmad, "US-Bangladesh Relations," in *The Daily Star*.

⁵⁶ K. Alan Kronstadt, "Bangladesh: Background and U.S. Relations," *CRS Report for Congress* (updated January 30, 2003), CRS-5, 6.

⁵⁷ Bill Clinton, *My Life*, (Hutchinson: London, 2004), pp 900-901.

In the unipolar world, US-Bangladesh relations have embarked upon an independent course without the influence of third party. The cooperation is not merely limited to economic and strategic areas. It has expanded into areas that are social, environmental, or non-strategic in nature. US support for democratization in Bangladesh - through training of election observers, funding of voter education programme, and technical assistance to the parliament - has been of immense value in ensuring free and fair elections conducted in 1996 and 2001. International Military Education Training (IMET) programme strengthens the international peacekeeping education, an asset for Bangladesh which is the leading contributor in UN peacekeeping missions. During FY 2000, Bangladesh became the first country to sign an agreement with the United States under which the United States cancelled \$10 million in debt owed by Bangladesh in return for Bangladesh setting aside \$8.5 million to conserve the country's mangrove forest.⁵⁸ These are important developments for a small country in dealing with the hyperpower. Therefore, the implication of unipolarity for Bangladesh has the potential of building a positive relationship with the United States based upon prosperity and modernity.

The actions on international political scene are the results of the confluences of three primary protégés. Metaphorically, they may be addressed as the 'three images' of reality representing the forces compelling the mutual behaviour of the states.⁵⁹ Conventional wisdom suggests that at any particular moment either one or a blend of two or all three work in a manner that the changes occur within the continued dynamics of international politics. These three forces (/images) are: the statesman, the state and the international system itself. Each of these images is important as states do not act in a vacuum and whenever there is a change in the state character it is energized by the power capability of the state leadership as well as the capability of the existent system to maintain its stability. In case of US-Bangladesh relations under unipolarity, the logic of Bangladesh's behaviour cannot simply derive from state-centric idealism. Unipolar implications must take into consideration the character of state leadership vis-à-vis the power of the state in adapting to unipolarity. The centuries-old theoretical framework of international relations - the statesman, the state and the international system - bears an important criterion of Bangladesh's response to an adaptive world order.

⁵⁸ K.Alan Kronstadt, "Bangladesh: Background and U.S. Relations," CRS-6.

⁵⁹ These terms are associated with Kenneth Waltz's famous notion of the title of his book, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*.

3.2. The Three Images: the Statesman, the State and the International System affecting Bangladesh under Unipolarity

An understanding of the US behaviour is crucial for weak states under the present unipolar environment as a useful tool in making a rational observation about its geo-strategic motivation. The following paragraphs are an attempt to focus our attention on explaining US behaviour in terms of the three images. This, I think, would be a profitable exercise in according decision-making process at the state-level an impersonal, scientific and discursive undertaking.⁶⁰

First Image: The Statesman

In the history of the United States and its congenital human civilization, twice America has devolved upon itself the unique position of remaking the *New World Order*. On both occasions, it was the American Presidents who saw such role befitting America's stature and strength. First, by Woodrow Wilson after the First World War, and second, by George Bush (senior) in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union. For both of them, the justification of America's international role is messianic: America has an obligation to spread its principles throughout the world. These principles hold the vision of peace where individual nation-states are to be judged by the universal system of moral law. But the underlying conviction of their message is the assumption of a Prometheus-bound global leadership by the United States and its greatness in the world.⁶¹

Great convictions must be matched by great deeds. Not that all American Presidents have lived up to Wilsonian idealism on a global scale. Some like Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman and John Kennedy will go down in history as vindicating Wilson, while others will be seen as demagogues unable to rise to global understanding of international politics by transcending nationalistic

⁶⁰ Kenneth Waltz provides a typical understanding of international politics where war and conflicts occur in his epoch-making book called *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. Man, the State and War are the three images that explain state behaviour in international environment. According to Waltz, in absence of a supranational entity, war is a necessary outcome between states locked in intimate political rivalry. But Waltz's observation calls for a change in thinking when we assume that the United States is the only global superpower and it is in the fitting legacy of the US role that it must assume the moral responsibility of unipolar leadership for peace and stability. The nomenclature then is better changed to *The Statesmen, The State and The International System*. See also "Prestige and Origins of War," in *Security Studies* 8, no. 4, pp 167-172; and also Josef Joffe, "Bismarck or Britain, Toward an American Grand Strategy after Bipolarity," pp 100-106.

⁶¹ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, (Simon and Schuster, Rockefeller Centre: USA, 1994), pp 17-55, 804-835.

ingoism. Bush is obviously in the second group who unlike his father lacks internationalist bent. This can be a serious flaw for a superpower that wants to lead global order. A simple analogy with his predecessor Bill Clinton will reveal how divergent he is in getting the world along with him. Bill Clinton saw in the world an immense potential of interdependence; he was a champion of *globalization*, where more integrated global community of shared responsibilities, shared benefits and shared values will overcome poverty, ignorance, disease and bad government.⁶² On the contrary, Bush is a go-it-alone warmonger, whose tone of arrogant supremacy can be highly disturbing to world stability. Imagine just how partisan it rings when he says, "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." It is simply a threat as saying: "Either you stand with civilization and good (us), or with barbarism and evil (them). Choose. And to those nations that choose wrongly, beware."⁶³ Clinton and Bush remind us of Thucydides' comparison of Pericles and Alcibiades, both statesmen of the same state, *Athens*, but differ so widely in their foreign policies. Pericles' collective-centered vision wants to avoid war, while Alcibiades' individual-centered vision drives him to conflict.⁶⁴

Therefore, the statesmen of great nations matter in international politics in ensuring peace and stability. Implications of unipolarity for world events are thus a product of the character of the US Presidents and their close associates who advise him on world matters. Implications are bound to vary in accordance with the variations in perceptions of personalities who hold high offices and can influence the US Presidents' mind. For a small country like Bangladesh, it matters a lot. Bangladesh-US ties rose to new heights when Bill Clinton was the President of the United States, but now that relationship seems to be experiencing ambivalence under Bush's foreign policy doctrine.⁶⁵

Second Image: The State

In International System, 'there is a price attached to every state'. The greater is the state, the higher is the price. That price is reflected in the value attached to its importance in resolving international issues. With importance

⁶² Bill Clinton, *My Life*, pp 890-895, 954-957.

⁶³ Michael Hirsh, "Bush and the World," in *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 81, No.5, September/October 2002, pp 18-43.

⁶⁴ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, translated by B. Jowett, (London: Oxford University Press, 1900).

⁶⁵ Donald C. F. Daniel, Peter J. Dombrowski and Rodger A. Payne, "The Bush Doctrine: Rest in Peace?" in *Defence Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring 2004), pp 18-39; Michael J. Mazarr, "George W. Bush, Idealist," in *International Affairs* 79, 3(2003), pp 503-522; Fareed Zakaria, "High Hopes, Hard Facts," in the international *Newsweek Magazine*, January 31, 2005, pp 16-19; Michael Hirsh, "Behind Bush's Back," in *Newsweek Magazine*, January 31, 2005, pp 22-26.

comes the burden of responsibility. For a superpower, global burden sharing must have the unanimous support of domestic politics at home.

In the United States, where democratic principles are model of statecraft, it can be very difficult for the government to rally support behind an international cause that Americans might think is not in their interest. Popular impulse or passion may downplay the true significance of a hyperpower in accepting a challenge. For example, when 18 American soldiers were killed in Somalia, a new domestic passion of dis-engagement overwhelmed the previous passion of engagement, thus prompting Bill Clinton to call off an intervention that his predecessor, Reagan, had ordered.⁶⁶ Such societal influences in pulling America off from leadership responsibility can be damaging to its status and prestige. The results could be hurting to its geo-strategic interests. In the future, it is not unlikely that vacuum created by America's nonchalance would be filled up by another great power, such as Russia or China or EU. Bush's *unilateralism* can be as undermining to America's primacy as his fellow Americans' emotional insistence upon *isolationism*. Both are negative ideological twins for America.⁶⁷ They both spring from the same American non-engaging impulse, creating a deep sense of hiatus in the rest of the world.

The influence of the US domestic politics upon its worldly behaviour can have an equally demoralizing effect upon the foreign *Diaspora* living in the United States. This can take on a very bigoted form if charged with religious propaganda. For example, expatriate Bangladeshis in the United States may be identified not as American citizens but as Muslims living as alien anthropological entities. Thus, those Bangladeshis may feel as much insecure from the domestic and social segregation of the Americans as the Americans living abroad feel from the Muslims. Hence, the Americans must make their society a better place for every citizen irrespective of caste, creed or religion, so that it behooves the image of an ideal hyperpower whose foundations are historically built upon the strength of an immigrant population.

The Third Image: The International System

In a unipolar world, the image of the United States as the global leader is the most abiding and monumental portrayal. Its most substantive nature and imperial obligations are expressed in the language of Zbigniew Brzezinski:

"American global primacy is unique in its scope and character. It is a hegemony of a new type that reflects many of the features of the American

⁶⁶ Josef Joffe, "Bismarck or Britain, Toward an American Grand Strategy after Bipolarity," p 101.

⁶⁷ Michael Hirsh, "Bush and the World," in *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2002, p 30.

democratic system: it is pluralistic, permeable, and flexible. Attained in the course of less than a century, the principal geopolitical manifestation of that hegemony is America's unprecedented role on the Eurasian landmass, hitherto to the point of origin of all previous contenders for global power. America is now Eurasia's arbiter, with no major Eurasian issue soluble without America's participation or contrary to America's interests."⁶⁸

Brzezinski rightly points up the role that America is playing now not only in world's political landscape, but also in global economic struggle. It is worth recalling American contribution to world's security and interdependence in the last half a century. Every major international institution – the UN, the World Bank, the IMF, NATO, GATT and others – was built under American leadership. All these institutions have amounted to a workable international system, where the US leadership acts as a buttress between the rich and the poor. When Jeffrey Sachs, the Nobel laureate in Economics, repents that the United States has not lived by its promise of larger share in the eradication of world poverty as the first target of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), it is also an indication of the demands placed upon the United States in obliging its global leadership role in the international system.⁶⁹ At no other time in history, other states have put so much of political and moral pressure on a superpower to be both a corrector of imperfection and a guarantor of global consensus in the United Nations. Truly speaking, in the international political and economic system, the United States by acting in unison with the UN can structurally confer upon the world order a durable stability. The only practical solution is to bolster the international community to which, as Colin Powell said, the United States is "attached by a thousand cords."⁷⁰ America must recognize that in a unipolar world, US leadership is about more than power. It is about global leadership in its true sense of being accepted by all.

It is the third image context which in fact is the driving force of the other two. A nation known for its superior place in international society would like to maintain that position for the sake of power. That position is abstractedly held by the perceptions of its people and leaders. Powerful governments translate these perceptions into real outcomes. These perceptions are by-product of a strong state's capability to shape events according to its rational choice for increasing its national interests backed by sources of power. In a

⁶⁸ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard, American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*, (Perseus Books Group: USA, 1997), p 194.

⁶⁹ Jeffrey Sachs, "The End of Poverty" in the *International Time Magazine*, 14 March 2005, pp 30-40.

⁷⁰ Quoted in Michael Hirsh's, "Bush and the World," p 43; also see Colin L. Powell's assertion on cooperation and multilateralism in his most enlightened article, "A Strategy of Partnerships," in *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2004, pp 22-34.

unipolar world, we have witnessed in varying degrees the measure of US power on states that are weak and vulnerable to its hegemonic leadership. This hegemonic leadership imposes compelling burden on weak states. But that compellence is a vital substance of ensuring continued existence of an international system that is constructed under the aegis of the United States after the Cold War.

3.3. The Burden of Compellence under U.S. Hegemony

Compellence is a sub-field of deterrence. It was developed by Thomas Schelling in *Arms and Influence*. He asserted that "compellence ... usually involves initiating an action ... that can cease, or become harmless, only if the opponent responds. The overt act, the first step, is up to the side that makes the compellent threat." Compellence is offensive and action oriented.⁷¹ Though developed in the wake of Cold War, and against a formidable foe, the Soviet Union, the strategy of compellence holds its merit in the post-Cold War international security environment. Particularly, its relevance becomes obvious for the United States with regard to weak states. The theory stipulated military ways and actions as the basis for achieving political goals. The interesting part of the theory is that very little is realised in the way of its application in economic sphere to compel a weak state which has same effects as compelling military actions would be expected to deliver.

There is a symbiotic relationship between hegemony and compellence. Without the attributes of a hegemon, compellence will not have desired outcome. For compellence to be effective in getting results, the hegemon must satisfy, at least, three conditions: first, it must have enough military power to be able to neutralize the protector of the weak state; second, it must have enough economic power that its withdrawal of economic support makes the weak state critically vulnerable; and, third, it must have enough 'threat value' in the psychic appreciation of the weak state. These three conditions permit the hegemon to exercise compellence by '*dominating the mind of the weak state*'.

The element of hegemony in US relations with Bangladesh must begin with a geo-political analysis. US intervention either implicitly or explicitly has had an impact on the political contours of Bangladesh since its independence. More so, why should Bangladesh evince so much of US interest in the changing international order? It is better to conceptualize the principles of US

⁷¹ Dr Richard H. Schultz, "Compellence and the Role of Air Power as a Political Instrument," in *The Future of Air Power*, (Air University Press, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: USA, July 1992), pp 179-188; *Dictionary of International Relations*, (Penguin Books: England, 1998), pp 87-88.

hegemony which has governed a stable relationship between the United States and Bangladesh since unipolar international system.

A hegemon does not like vacuum. The fear is that the vacuum may be filled up by another powerful actor. In South Asia, the rise of India or the influence of China can be addressed effectively by the United States if it welded its interests into those of weaker states. While US interest is primarily strategic, that of the weak is economic. Therefore, the most significant issue for Bangladesh is economic.

For a hegemon, wealth and power are complementary. Distribution of wealth across board yields power. Whosoever is wealthier has greater ability to exercise power over others by virtue of its compelling strength. Moreover, wealth and power are sought not only by state actors but also by non-state organizations, such as multinational business corporations.⁷² In the combination of factors explaining power and wealth, neither India nor China has the corresponding ability of creating confidence potential that the United States has in South Asia. Moreover, power provides outcomes for validating political actions which the United States has done successfully in many Third World countries including Bangladesh. The political actions of the strong, in turn, create a moral obligation for the weak.

The burden of compellence is produced by the need for economic and political support. A weak state may ask for support on both counts. The degree of compellence is directly proportional to the amount of support-need in strong-weak relationship. The following figure makes these points schematically.

Economic
(To what extent are economic supports needed)

	High	Medium	Low	
Political (To what extent political support is needed)	(H,H)	(H,M)	(H,L)	High
	(M,H)	(M,M)	(M,L)	Medium
	(L,H)	(L,M)	(L,L)	Low
	High	Medium	Low	

Degree of Compellence

Figure 2: The Burden of Compellence versus Hegemon's Supportive Power

As figure 2 illustrates, attempts to separate the real relationship between economics and politics are bound to produce failures in determining causal links between the strong and the weak states. Very little of modern societies is untouched by the economy, and vice versa. But this relationship is not symmetrical. Military burden, unlike economic burden, is not primary, but

⁷² Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony*, pp 18-30.

derivative. In international dealings, it may be a minor issue for a state not intent upon expanding its resources for aggrandizing muscle power. But it has been customary to accept economic burden without even analysis. In fact, the important issue of the relationship of economic interdependence and national security has engaged the attention of serious thinkers over the past three centuries.⁷³ The preservation of society's economic sustenance takes precedence over the efficient organization of military machine. Hence, a state is vulnerable to compellence from outside pressure much more when it is economically weak but militarily strong because weak internal economy may lead to violent civil disobedience. Contrarily, there are many states whose strong economic footing has always been a redresser of comparable weak military.

Take the case of Japan and Europe. They were part of the victorious coalition as a consequence of the grand strategic arrangement after World War II. Both needed the support of the United States to recover – Europe through Marshall Plan and Japan through massive aid programmes. Their economic recovery has been much faster and more advanced than their military reforms. Their cooperation in foreign policy strategy after the Cold War overshadows major differences. European Union and the Euro corps have been surmised on the integration of European militaries into NATO rather than as autonomous bodies. Japan's long-term official planning document, released in 1995, called for a reduction in military forces and continued reliance on the United States. This has enormously reduced their defence expenditures. This also suggests that major bulk of their budget can be released for economic growth, thus reducing their dependence on the United States. Politically, they still need US support through NATO and US-Japan Security Treaty respectively.⁷⁴ The situation is similar to the coordinates of first row, third column on the right hand corner (Figure 2). The model suggests that the degree of compellence should be low. The prediction of the model justifies fact. In case of Japan and Europe, US putative political pressure is relaxing as opposed to the scenario during Cold War era.⁷⁵

Relations between the United States and Bangladesh provide an interesting example of the capability of a superpower to compel the conduct of a weak

⁷³ Robert Gilpin, "Economic Interdependence and National Security in Historical Perspective," in *Economic Issues and National Security*, edited by Klaus Knorr and Frank N. Trager (University Press of Kansas: USA, 1982), p 18.

⁷⁴ Michael Mastanduno, "Preserving the Unipolar Moment," in *America's Strategic Choices*, (The MIT Press: USA, 1999), pp 137-139.

⁷⁵ Eugene Gholz, Daryl G. Press, and Harvey M. Sapolsky, "Come Home, America," and Michael Mastanduno, "Preserving the Unipolar Moment," in *America's Strategic Choices*, pp 137-154, 200- 243.

state and the seeming constraints of the latter in avoiding the situation when its economic and political support from the former is inevitable. The early years of Bangladesh were one of extreme economic hardships. The compellent acceptance of US aid enabled the government of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman regime to gradually overcome his reluctance to deal with the former opponent, the United States.⁷⁶ The situation was (H,H) of the model. The degree of compellence was high. In fact, the economic aid was used as an option for coercive condescension. Coupled with the political support that many within the government looked for in the United States made Bangladesh susceptible to US Strategy of Compellence. We have already discussed the consequences of US food cut during the 1974 as an example of economic coercion for exerting US interests.⁷⁷

During Zia's rule, Bangladesh gained in international prestige by following somewhat independent foreign policy course despite its dependence on the United States economically. Though the situation was (M,H), it corresponded to high degree of compellence. Zia had to neutralize Indo-Soviet influence and project US-Pakistan-China as the ally of Bangladesh. In fact, the basic framework of Bangladesh's dependence on and closeness with the United States survived in the post-Zia era.⁷⁸

Ershad regime's stand on international issues coincided with the stand of the United States. The reason was US aid. In fact, his government's dependence on the United States was such that it not only followed the World Bank and US prescriptions for privatization of the Bangladesh economy but also political remedies at home. The situation reverted back to (H,H) of the model. Obedience to US compellence determined the regime's survival.⁷⁹ He even went as far as referring the Soviet Union as dangerous and expelling Soviet diplomats from Bangladesh as discussed earlier.

It is a strange coincidence that the advent of unipolarity and popular democracy in Bangladesh happened together. 1990 is a watershed in the history of Bangladesh when people's aspiration found its expression in the hope of realization of democratic ideals. Since then, the new US-Bangladesh relations have been more visible in economic and other strategic areas. Both Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina pursued policies of close cooperation with the United States. The first ever visit by an American President, Bill Clinton in

⁷⁶ Sarbjit Sharma, *US-Bangladesh Relations: A Critique*, p 144.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, pp 87-97.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 62-73.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, pp 73-79.

March 2000, marked a subtle shift in US policy towards Bangladesh.⁸⁰ But that does not mean that US's power of compellence has reneged.

The most persuasive power of its strength came in the outcome of 11 January 2007, when a civil government backed by the military declared a state of emergency and took over the falling reins of Bangladesh. The proposed parliamentary elections, destined to be held on 22-24 January 2007, were cancelled till conditions were created for the holding of a free and fair election. There was the popular support behind the changed circumstances. It is now clear that for salvaging the country from a catastrophic bloodbath, the role played by the United States and other western countries was pivotal. The advice given by the United Nations that if the proposed one-sided elections were held, it might cause an immediate withdrawal of the Bangladeshi peacekeepers from the UN missions. No wonder the recommendation had an adventitious effect. This indicates the extent of US success in demonstrating a sufficiently satisfactory degree of concern in the internal affairs of Bangladesh. That concern is expected to grow stronger in the coming years. At least, there are three possible reasons for US interests in Bangladesh.

First, while the US agenda of engaging Pakistani military generates deep concerns in India, US approach to Bangladesh is a new vision for trilateral cooperation at building economic and strategic cooperation within the region. Ties between India and the United States have improved significantly in the post Cold War period. Do India and America want Bangladesh to be part of their strategy against China – it is a strategic question that deserves academic discourse.

Second, a democratic Bangladesh is a guarantee against religious terrorism and an insurance of security in the region. Describing Bangladesh as a “crucial player” in the fight against Islamic extremism, a US security delegation recommended to President Bush to declare Bangladesh a “high priority” strategic partner in US foreign and national security policies. In recent years, India has also advanced similar propositions.⁸¹

Third, American interest in natural gas has surged US investments in Bangladesh. The investment is likely to rise in the future. It may be mentioned here that US control over Middle East oil is premised on continued supply of energy to its western allies and Japan. This helps US oil companies to be in charge of this vital strategic asset.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, pp 129-135.

⁸¹ M. Shahidul Islam, “CG Should Defer Deals with India, US to Elected Government,” in *The Weekly Holiday*, May 18, 2007, p1 & 8; M. Shahidul Islam, “What Does US want from Bangladesh?” in *The Weekly Holiday*, March 23, 2007, p1 & 11.

The foregoing paragraphs suggest that there is a high degree of complementarity of interests between the United States and Bangladesh. Interests on both sides are measured from one state's needs and the other state's power over the former. Needs create the conditions for obligation. In inter-state relations, such obligation is not based on mere idealism. Its rationality is presumed to be driven by a combination of both realist and idealist interpretation of mutual relationship. As such, there exists a strong influence of America's strategic choice upon Bangladesh.

But it will be a gross misinterpretation if burden imposed by obligations on the weak state is judged to be a perennial impairment of its freedom of action. A hegemon does not necessarily have to act like a policeman ever ready to strike at the slightest derailment. Hegemony does not necessarily mean discord of mental adjustment between the strong and the weak. A hegemon can also create conditions for cooperation. Under such circumstances, burden of compellence entertains the possibility that the weak will define its self interest in such a way as to make the strong cooperate with empathy.

In section one, we have discussed in details the implications of unipolarity for weak states. Section two has highlighted the possibility of hegemonic cooperation as being able to contribute to interests shared by both the hyperpower and the weak state. Building on the findings of these two sections, the next section discusses the options of cooperation for Bangladesh in a unipolar world.

4. POLICY OPTIONS FOR BANGLADESH IN A UNIPOLAR WORLD

"US policy toward Bangladesh emphasizes support for political stability and democracy; economic reform and market-opening policies; social and economic development; and improvement of human rights. The United States has long-standing supportive relationship with Bangladesh and has viewed Bangladesh as a moderate voice in the Islamic world."

----- K. Alan Kronstadt, Analyst in Asian Affairs (CRS Report for Congress, 2003)

The theory of hegemonic stability postulates order and discipline through the patronage of hyperpower. Such patronage may be either compelling or self-willing but, as pointed out in the game theoretic model of Prisoners' Dilemma, not necessarily antithetical to mutual cooperation. Even if the principles of sovereignty and security dilemma contradict the degree of confidence to be placed in the intentions of the United States, they do not prevent the possibility of cooperation with the sole superpower. Though hegemonic stability depends on asymmetrical power matrix but cooperation is

inevitable for the maximization of national interest applied with prudence and discretion. Any extension of national interest among the engaging countries if viewed with a grain of doubt as being exploited by some would ostensibly evoke opposition by others. Hence, hegemonic stability does depend on rational choices being guided towards pursuit of national interests intelligently. In this regard, the words of Amartya Sen can serve as a strong reminder to guiding the actions of states:

“Rationality is invoked not only in understanding others and the world, but also in our efforts at cooperation or competition or even combat, which require us to take a view of what we may expect from others, either on their own initiative, or in response to what we may ourselves do. This is, of course, a central concern in game theory and in the study of strategic relations in general. The importance of these considerations in the world of practice has become much more widely recognized in recent decades.”⁸²

Rationality requires that states need to look into the policy alternatives in dealing with issues. Rationality also demands a comprehensive and deliberate attempt at probing these issues with the help of thoughtful scrutiny and examination of problems. For a small state in dealing with the hyperpower, the challenge is how to maximize the utility of its divergent interests. The hyperpower may reserve the freedom of applying the policies of *containment* modeled after America’s Cold War policy or *compellence*, as recently carried out in the Balkans, Iraq or Afghanistan. But for a small state, the challenge is to adopt a policy of *engagement* based on looking beyond transient receipt of favours or disfavours to that of long-standing assurance of benefits.

Taking policy decisions in the sphere of foreign relations is a most difficult task. The challenge is to determine how much of the enterprise should be ‘public’ and how much should be allowed to be ‘private’. In areas other than foreign relations, merger between the public and the private mostly subsumes in looking after the interest of the public which is, in many ways, a collective concern of private interests. But centrality to policy making exercise in foreign relations is based upon national interest which is not the least private and, in many cases, does not bear upon public interest of common well-being. Yet foreign relations affect in an intangible or powerful way not only the minds of common citizens but also their existence when actions of one state proliferate the domains of others by way of economic, ideological and military influences. In a globalized world, such influences are not without implications for a state’s domestic politics. One simple example is the price of oil which can have far-reaching consequences in the lives of poor people all

⁸² Amartya Sen, *Rationality and Freedom*, (Oxford University Press: New Delhi, India, 2002), p 44.

over the world, whether a state is related to global oil politics or not. Therefore, exercise on foreign policy commitment definitely requires a different kind of mental and engagement skills than skills required for domestic policies.⁸³ Where national interests bind rational choice for the selection of options, there is a need for taking into cognizance long-range consequences for inter-state engagement. The point that 'there are no permanent friends but only permanent interests in inter-state relations' requires a patience of wisdom, particularly in dealing with great powers.

American policy towards Bangladesh has five goals (as can be seen in the quoted statement below the title of this section): first, political stability and democracy; second, economic reform and market-opening policies; third, social and economic development; fourth, improvement of human rights; and fifth, suppression of religious extremism. The United States admission of a long-standing supportive relationship with Bangladesh suggests its strategic interest in Bangladesh. The first and the fifth US goals are urgent policy priorities, while the second, third and fourth are long-term imperatives, since their prospects are the result of successful translation of the other two.

As the US interests derive strength from its military, economic, informational and diplomatic primacy, so how a small state determines and accommodates US interests without losing its own self-interests is the principal geo-political goal for its existence. It requires subtle and deep imaginative appreciation of global politics on the part of Bangladesh leadership. Recalcitrant resistance to issues of vital interests to the United States may be costly to the small state as it may invite and expose itself to America's direct intervention into its internal affairs to the detriment of its core values. Thus, Bangladesh should adopt a policy that demonstrates cooperation with the United States with regard to commonly shared values and principles, but carefully convincing insistence on abeyance in matters of disagreement. The main purpose is not to alienate itself from the United States.

While the policies to be adopted by Bangladesh must be effective in the short term, they need to be rational with important long-term goals. The short-term goals are easy to visualize, but strategies that seek to materialize long-term goals, requiring a range of a decade or more, have to be developed and

⁸³ For a very enlightened understanding of what policy is, see Warne Pearsons, *Public Policy, An introduction to the theory and practice of policy analysis*, (Edward Elgar Publishing Limited: Cheltenham, UK, 1995). Reading the book will give a clear understanding about how policies should be conceived, engendered, incorporated and implemented. Same understanding applies in case of policy formulation with another state.

implemented with enduring commitment. Bangladesh's vital interests and their achievement is as much the concern of Bangladesh people as they make for America's concerns. Protection of these interests can be strengthened if Bangladesh develops a relationship with the United States on the basis of shared values and norms. Therefore, while Bangladesh develops its strategies for dealing with the hyperpower in the 21st century, it must bear in mind both the capabilities and limitations of that power. The following list of Bangladesh's interest areas present short-term to long-term strategies in engaging the United States. Identification of strategies as short-term or long-term is basically strategic perspective. Dividing the strategies into short-term and long-term is not contingent upon merely the duration of engagement rather indicates the capacity and willingness of a state in addressing a problem to the degree it intends to rely upon other's mutual cooperation.

4.1. Short-Term Strategies

Terrorism

Islamic militancy in the form of religious terrorism is a serious internal security threat facing Bangladesh today. In the last three years till July 12, 2007, 54 people had been killed due to Islamist terrorism (2005, 35; 2006, 12; 2007, 7).⁸⁴ Major incidents of bomb blasts in Bangladesh since September 2001 till August 2006 have claimed 113 killed and 1479 injured (2001; 14, 102 : 2002; 27, 461; 2003; 9, 18, 2004; 29, 370 : 2005; 31, 460: 2006; 3, 68).⁸⁵ These terrorist incidents of bomb blasts are attributed to Islamist terrorism and Left-Wing extremism.⁸⁶

Two incidents of terrorism deserve special mention to highlight the severity of terrorism in recent years in Bangladesh. On August 21, 2004, a series of grenade attacks on former Prime Minister (she is Prime Minister again now) and Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina's rally left at least 19 people dead and 200 others injured.⁸⁷ On 17 August 2005, around 500 bomb explosions occurred at 300 locations in 63 out of 64 districts of Bangladesh.

⁸⁴(http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/bangladesh/database/Fatalities_Islamist%20Terrorism%202006.htm), quoted in South Asian Intelligence Review (SAIR).

⁸⁵ (<http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/bangladesh/database/majorbombblast.htm>), quoted in South Asian Intelligence Review (SAIR).

⁸⁶ See for details of assessment on Bangladesh (<http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/bangladesh/index.htm>).

⁸⁷ (<http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/bangladesh/majorincidents.htm>).

The explosions were so well orchestrated that all bombs went off within a half hour period.⁸⁸

There is no denying the fact that there are several terrorist and militant extremist groups operating in Bangladesh including Harkat ul Jihad al Islami (HUJI), Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB), and Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB). It is also alleged that two Islamist parties, namely the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Islami Okiya Jote (IOJ) have created space for terrorist activities within the country.⁸⁹ Jamaat also reportedly has ties to HUJI which has ties to Al Qaeda.⁹⁰ Bin Laden had sanctioned Taka 20 million (US\$ 0.40 million) for recruiting and training cadres and organizing terrorist and subversive activities in Bangladesh.⁹¹ HUJI prides itself in being regarded as the "Bangladeshi Taliban" and professedly aims to establish an extremist, Taliban-type government in Bangladesh.⁹²

The implication of religious militancy in Bangladesh is what constitutes a matter of significant concern for the United States in its GWOT campaign. So, there is a need for correctly unearthing the root of terrorism in Bangladesh. Unless the causes are ascertained critically, challenge posed by terrorism prosecuted by Islamist militancy and Left-Wing extremism will largely remain a surface operation. Therefore, it is pertinent that we find the real causes as to why terrorism is gaining ground in Bangladesh. There are fundamentally two reasons: one, sociological and the other, political.

Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries and that makes it a perfect target for Al-Qaeda and its ever-expanding network of religious militancy. Corruption is widespread in Bangladesh. In a row for five successive years, it has topped as the world's most corrupt country. US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Richard Boucher, has stated, "the main obstacles [for Bangladesh] are corruption and poor governance."⁹³ Both poverty and corruption contribute to a sense of irreconcilable deprivation and injustice in the society where about forty percent population live below the poverty line. Bangladesh was born through a bloody war as a consequence of its people's struggle against economic deprivation and political injustice. But sine

⁸⁸ (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/17_August_2005_Bangladesh_bombings).

⁸⁹ Bruce Vaughn, "Bangladesh: Background and U.S. Relations," in CRS Report for Congress dated September 7, 2006, pp CRS-7.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ B. Raman, "Bangladesh and Jihad: Terrorism,"

(<http://www.saag.org/papers9/paper887.htm>), paper no.887 dated 07.01.2004.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ "Corruption, Intra-party Conflicts Challenge Bangladesh's Next Elections," in *United News of Bangladesh*, May 18, 2006.

independence political privation and economic suffering have not been addressed adequately. The rich have become richer by plundering the meager resources of the country. This has led to a large section of the poverty-stricken population to seek justice through the means of theological justice and leftist indoctrination. The conviction of delivering justice for the benefit of the majority is raised to the level of egoist principle. Therefore, to see in Islamist or leftist terrorism merely the shadows of militancy is to miss the core point of human longing for egalitarianism.

The second reason which is political is even more debilitating to national unity. The Islamists have been sought and patronized by different parties to secure political advantage.⁹⁴ The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which won the 2001 parliamentary elections, had recruited the two Islamic fundamentalist parties, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Okiya Jote, as coalition partners. The elections gave them a landslide victory but also afforded the Islamist parties scope for advancing political machinations. Therefore, looking at religious militancy from point of ideological connotation is bordered on over-simplification. If Bangladesh is to win its war against terrorism in the form of destructive forces inhered in religious militancy and leftist extremism, it has to take on institutional and intellectual challenges where the United States needs to be correctly briefed and its support called for, as required. Richard Boucher's statement, in this context, is worth recalling:

"We see that Bangladesh is a very populated country with a developing security service, a developing ability to fight terrorism, with some successes already that they can show in terms of arresting the leaders of the major terrorist group that has been operating in Bangladesh, but a lot of work to do, in terms of getting the whole network and getting, stopping other people who might be operating there."⁹⁵

Success in combating terrorism with courage made it felt throughout the country when the main perpetrators of the 17 August 2005 bombing, Bangla Bhai and Shaykh Abdur Rahman, were captured by security forces along with 4 other militants, and later executed by hanging on 30 March 2007.⁹⁶

The fight against religious or ideological terrorism is a challenge of different kind and the support of the United States to Bangladesh to combat such unconventional threat will be of great strategic value. Since the "War on Terror" began in late 2001, it has become the US government's most abiding

⁹⁴ Air Commodore Ishfaq Ilahi Choudhury, "Combating Religious Militancy," in the *Daily Star*, July 28, 2007, p 12.

⁹⁵ "Richard Boucher Holds a News Conference in Calcutta, India," CQ Transcripts, August 4, 2006.

⁹⁶ (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/17_August_2005_Bangladesh_bombings).

and well-entrenched military operations overseas. There is no negation that the cloak of "Frankenstein" worn by terrorism in the politics of Bangladesh casts an ominous shadow upon the peace and stability of its public life.⁹⁷ For years, Bangladesh enjoyed an acclaim of the outside world as a moderate Muslim country with accommodation for secularism in its culture. Bangladesh alone cannot fight internal terrorism which has its network spread across the globe through organizations like Al-Qaeda. It must not be forgotten that 'Islamic Fundamentalism' is an issue that can be exploited gainfully by other states in destroying America's goodwill for Bangladesh that it needs to preserve in a unipolar world.⁹⁸ Moreover, Bangladesh cannot afford to be labeled as the progenitor of conflict on religious or other extremist lines under globalization process that purports to cement the ties of interdependence by negating the myth of 'The Clash of Civilizations'. Therefore, the goal of Bangladesh's anti-terror campaign, at least for the time being till it achieves independent capacity of combating the threat, should be to continue supporting and be supported by the United States.

Bangladesh should focus on three areas in seeking US support for anti-terror campaign.

First, there should be a continued support to improve professionalism of Bangladesh's security forces. GWOT is underpinned by information operations. Sharing of knowledge by both the United States and Bangladesh is extremely useful in locating the insurgent hide-outs and their plan of actions. Expertise gained on advanced information collection and requisite intelligence capabilities will be more important than bearing upon the militants with sheer brunt of physical force.

Second, since the military remains politically important in Bangladesh, it should convince the United States about military's role in fighting the asymmetric warfare that terrorism involves. Military aid and co-operation in support of civilian rule by way of greater control over the madrassas, closer

⁹⁷ AMM Shawkat Ali, "The Rising Muslim Population, Bangla Bhai and the State," in *The Daily Prothom Alo*, 28 May 2004; ABM Musa, "The Capture of Bangla Bhai," in *The Daily Prothom Alo*, 25 May 2004, p 8; Mohammad Yahya Akhter, "Countering Terrorism: Two Faces of Failure," in *The Daily Prothom Alo*, 5 January 2005; Abu Ahmad, "No Foreigner Can Place Anyone in Power," in *The Daily Prothom Alo*, 16 October 2004.

⁹⁸ When J Kofar Black's attention was drawn to Indian allegation against Bangladesh as harbouring terrorists, he replied, "The Indians think that there are bases of Islamic Terrorists in Bangladesh which is a threat to the security of this region. But this is an opinion of the Indians, not mine." (*The Daily Prothom Alo*, 6 September, 2004); see also Sadeq Khan's, "US-Bangla relations: Making a mountain out of a mole," (*The Weekly Holiday*, dated 26 March 2005, pp 1,16) for an interesting Indian attitude in trying to impress the United States to look upon Bangladesh as a politically unstable country posing a threat to regional security.

surveillance of suspect groups and potential terrorist camps and countering terrorist propaganda need to be explained to the United States as a demonstration of conviction in thwarting terrorism.

Finally, Bangladesh's anti-terror campaign must be directed towards long-term strategy of improving the economic conditions of its poverty-stricken people. The goal of winning the hearts and minds of the deprived is the *ultima ratio* in defeating terrorism in Bangladesh.

Poverty and Corruption

The ultimate goal for Bangladesh is the reduction of poverty and creating an egalitarian society. The foremost obligation of the United Nations, as the world body, is to see that countries adopt and implement policies to materialize Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which underscore reducing global poverty by half by 2015.⁹⁹ In light of MDGs, the government has approved the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper titled 'Unlocking the Potential: National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction'. PRSP vision is to explore the potential of Bangladesh and accelerate economic growth to reduce poverty. The government has set an eight-point strategic agenda that build on three principles of pro-poor economic growth, human development and governance for attaining this vision. An action plan of PRSP has been formulated on the basis of important activities that are: employment generation, ensuring nutrition, quality education at primary, secondary and vocational levels, establishment of local governance and development of maternal health, ensuring sanitation and safe water and ensuring criminal justice and monitoring.¹⁰⁰

Bangladesh has shown some encouraging signs in GDP growth at 5.5%, which has been one of the best among the Least Developing Countries (LDCs) since the beginning of this century; at the same time, national poverty rate has decreased from 58.8% in 1991 to 49.8% in 2000.¹⁰¹ Referring to a recent

⁹⁹ Bangladesh Millennium Development Goals are: (1) Reduction of poverty by half by 2015; (2) Primary education to all children and elimination of gender discrimination; (3) Reduction of infant mortality by 65% and maternal mortality by 75%, and malnutrition by 50%; (4) Generation of employment; (5) Ensuring participatory and good governance. (The World Bank Study on *Attaining the Millennium Development Goals in Bangladesh*, February 2005).

¹⁰⁰ *Bangladesh Economic Review, 2006*, Economic Adviser's Wing, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, "Chapter 13, Poverty Alleviation," pp 169-198.

¹⁰¹ Seminar on "Free Market Economy is a Panacea for Economic Development and Ensuring Equity," in NDC, Bangladesh, July 2005, p4; See also, document of the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, *Poverty in Bangladesh, Building on Progress*, March 2003; Reforms in Bangladesh: A Comparative Assessment in Relation to other South Asian Countries," by Pradumma B. Rana, in *The Bangladesh Economy in Transition* edited by M.G.

World Bank report, previous World Bank Director Xian Zhu observed that Bangladesh required raising its GDP growth to 7.5% or more if it aspired to join the rank of middle-income countries by 2016.¹⁰²

Despite successes, Bangladesh as a LDC faces an uphill task in addressing poverty. The biggest threat from poverty is the erosion of a nation's capacity for growth towards sustainable development. The most ominous influence upon poverty results from corruption and bad governance. It is believed that if Bangladesh could tackle these problems, the GDP growth would rise from current average of 5.5% to expected 7.5%. Corruption works in a vicious cycle. It vitiates the realm of clean politics which again degenerates the capacity building of a state's functioning mechanism. Failure to ensure state's capacity building process for growth and development can lead to threatening path of instability. States fail to exist as a secure viable unit when poverty strikes its social fabric as an incorrigible malaise. If some observers warn that Bangladesh is a fragile state or failing state, then poverty should be accepted as one of the twin pillars of fragility, the other being religious militancy. Bangladesh has featured as high as seventeenth in Foreign Policy's global ranking of failed states, with the worst ratings for uneven development and criminalization.¹⁰³ The former World Bank Country Director Christine Wallich once described Bangladesh as a "fragile state".¹⁰⁴

The problem with poverty is that it deprives a state of its freedom of choice. It does so principally by two ways; firstly, it emaciates the possibility of garnering appropriate social capital, vital for sustenance of democratic institutions; and secondly, it engenders corrupt means for exploiting the poor by strengthening the hands of the rich. The consequences of poverty have far-reaching effects into the overall adjustment of a state with the outside world. In terms of political reality, we live in a globalized world of unipolar regime wherein the persuasion of capitalist economic growth and the emergence of

Kibria, (UPL: Bangladesh, 1997), pp 7-25. Christine Wallich's observation, in this regard, is worth noting: "Growth-oriented and progressive human development policies have substantially reduced poverty, increased life expectancy, brought about almost universal primary school enrolments, and made Bangladesh an example for other countries in girls' education. Micro-credit has supported social inclusion. In fact, Bangladesh has achieved more social and economic progress than most countries at its income level. It outperforms West Bengal and Pakistan across the gamut of social and economic indicators, and also two-thirds of the Indian states. Bangladesh is the only country in South Asia except Sri Lanka likely to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)." (Presentation given to National Defense College entitled Security and Economic Development on 4 May 2005).

¹⁰² "Bangladesh Needs to Open up Economy," in *The Daily Star*, July 30, 2007, p 8.

¹⁰³ "The Failed States Index," Foreign Policy and The Fund for Peace, available at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/cms.php?story_id=3098.

¹⁰⁴ *The Daily Star*, 2 August 2005.

stable democracy as the grand strategy of the United States make their mark upon the Third World. The control of the market system by transnational corporations, most of which are west-backed and its implication for creating a nexus of few local rich-capitalists have great encouragement towards fomenting corruption at the most vulnerable spots of state machinery. The government needs to be more forthwith in calling for external technical and legal expertise, particularly that of the United States, in establishing the tools for sustainable operation of anti-corruption as an institutional mechanism.

Both 'anti-poverty and anti-corruption campaigns as policies are not amenable to reductionist forms of explanation. They are many-faceted and multi-dimensional and require a long strategic engagement of national consequence. But at international level, while seeking the assistance of a great power in terms of aid, loan, financial information, graft and so on, help sought does not need to be beyond the formulation of short-term strategies. A state which cannot handle these afflictions with its own moral and material resources will never be stable and remain vulnerable to exploitation from external influences. As a holistic need, economic freedom for a state cannot be guaranteed so long majority of its society is impoverished and a small section is mischievously corrupt.

We have seen in section two of this paper that economically backward country is always vulnerable to pressures from external influences. Therefore, poverty and corruption cannot be treated as divorced issues. The label of 'Fragile State' by the United State bears negative consequences for a weak state, particularly when it exercises so much of discretionary power in different international institutions. Creating a confident image of a viable state in the impression of the United States is in itself a wise step in a unipolar world.

4.2. Long -Term Strategies

Education

In the 21st century, the world as a system is comprehended in the scale of globalization. Globalization suggests that inter-connectivity amongst the peoples of the nation-states is based on the availability of scientific tools to each other. These scientific tools are enough proof that we live in a global knowledge-based society. Knowledge can properly be used and utilized through an education system that meets the demands of time.

Education with inert or dogmatic ideas is not only useless, but above all things, harmful. Much of terrorism that we have talked about previously is due to be alleged to be due to the lack of oversight and interest in the education system of madrassas in Bangladesh. Some consider them to be a breeding

ground of igniting the destructive passion aroused by social deprivation and poverty. In 1971, there were about 1000 madrassas in Bangladesh. By 2005 their estimated number rose to 54,000. Today more than 30% students go to madrassas and their percentage is increasing.¹⁰⁵

So, guiding the knowledge into the right path of developing human resource should be the prime goal of a dynamic education policy. That needs bringing about uniformity and coherence amongst the different educational system in vogue. That does not mean that madrassa system should be abolished. The system needs reform and can even be transformed into higher learning of religious wisdom.

Everyone knows about the fruits of good education in America. There is a growing competition for the world's best minds to enroll themselves in American universities, and Bangladesh can very well exploit the situation to its advantage. Foreign students who study in the United States become adherents and advocates of its liberal values when they return home. The educational models must stress on vocational training so that skilled humans have their demands in the global employment market. American aid should be pursued in educational field; if need be, American investment must be encouraged in opening up private educational institutions in Bangladesh. America is in the forefront of integrating global knowledge. All over the world, universities are adapting American research practices which are most suited to the productive needs of society. Nations seeking advancement are closely imitating America's research institutes as models.¹⁰⁶ But US-Bangladesh cooperation on education has been under-valued. The drivers of modern informational and technological productivity depend on the appreciation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and management science both of which are the essence of American scholastic mind.

However, seeking US assistance in education should also be planned judiciously to incorporate monetary grant with careful supervision. Channels of monetary support for both private and public educational institutions must not be allowed to go waste. One example of money dissipation is when scholarship or research funding is given to senior scholars but not necessarily to most productive ones. Therefore, US aid in education may look into four areas for the time being in improving Human Resource Development: (1) Madrassa System; (2) Vocational institutes for creating skilled and semi-skilled workforce; (3) Productive research works at universities, and; (4) Education of military and civil servants in knowledge-based administrative

¹⁰⁵ Air Cdre Ishfaq Ilahi Choudhury, "Combating religious militancy," in *The Daily Star*, July 28, 2007, p 12.

¹⁰⁶ Levin, "World of Knowledge," in *The Newsweek Magazine*, August 26, 2006, pp 36-40B.

skills. The aid must be permitted both in private and public education sectors with effective government regulatory oversight.

Economy

Economic growth means development and development means security. The essence of globalization is to create interdependence amongst the free nations of the world based on economic transaction. This means that states can be mutually supportive of each other through exchange of economic resources as well as financial assistance.

By June 1973, the United States provided \$ 433 million of grant assistance to Bangladesh roughly one-third of the total amount of foreign aid to Bangladesh since its liberation in 1971. That aid was nectar for a newly independent war-ravaged country. Thus, US-Bangladesh cooperation began as a compulsion through the economic channel.¹⁰⁷ US economic aid to Bangladesh since independence makes the primacy of economic factor in US-Bangladesh relationship extremely significant for Bangladesh.¹⁰⁸

The State Department requested a total of \$ 92,727,000 in assistance for Bangladesh in the FY 2007 budget.¹⁰⁹ US assistance to Bangladesh supports a wide range of areas: health and economic development projects; improvement of working conditions including the elimination of child labour; non-proliferation, anti-terrorism, de-mining and related programmes (NADR); and military programmes. US economic assistance also helps Bangladesh uphold its World Trade Organizations (WTO) commitment. The table below shows US assistance to Bangladesh in the last four years.

¹⁰⁷ Sarbjit Sharma, *US-Bangladesh Relations: A Critique*, p 151; Bruce Vaughn, "Bangladesh: Background and U.S. Relations," *CRS Report for Congress*, September 7, 2006, pp CRS 1 -3. Bangladesh is a recipient of significant international aid. It has received more than \$ 30 billion from foreign donors since its independence in 1971.

¹⁰⁸ The United States was once Bangladesh's principal donor in the 1960s and 1970s. It is not so now. Presently, Japan is the largest bilateral donor of Bangladesh. But the Americans persuade the poor countries to believe that the largesse of World Bank, IMF and WTO is contingent upon US's goodwill for the poor countries. The assumption is not untrue. America wields so much power in international financial institutions that it is clearly evident the way the US gets things done for the states which comply with its political agenda. Pakistan has noted its allegiance to US strategic interests in Afghanistan. In turn, Pakistan is the greatest beneficiary of IMF and World Bank loans made available for Pakistan by the United States.

¹⁰⁹ Bruce Vaughn, "Bangladesh: Background and U.S. Relations," *CRS Report for Congress*, pp CRS 1-3.

US Assistance to Bangladesh, 2003-2007 ¹¹⁰
(thousand dollars)

Account	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006 Estimate	FY 2007 request
CSH	27,600	35,500	33,412	26,384	25,884
DA	21,391	18,200	16,535	10,859	8,400
ESF	4,000	4,971	4,960	4,950	5,000
FMF	0	0	248	990	875
IMET	772	862	1,035	891	985
NADR	0	0	893	200	3,713
Peace Corps	1,248	1,566	1,773	1,804	1,870
Totals	55,011	61,099	58,856	46,078	46,727
Food Aid					
P.L.480 Title II Grant ^a	38,577	33,451	22,122	29,934	46,000
Section 416(b) ^b	49	53	3,257	-	-

Sources: CRS Report RL 31362, *U.S. Foreign Aid to East and Southeast Asia*, by Thomas Lum. U.S. Department of State, USAID, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Note: Child Survival and Health (CSH), Development Assistance (DA), Economic Support Funds (ESF), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training, (IMET), Non-proliferation, Anti-terrorism, De-mining and Related programs (NADR).

a. USAID data - includes freight costs.

b. USDA data - does not include freight costs.

Fortunately, in the last few years, Bangladesh has been gradually transforming itself from an aid-dependent country to a trade-dependent country. The United States remains Bangladesh's largest single market absorbing around 30 percent of its exports. ¹¹¹ Bangladesh's export earning from the United States in 2005-2006 FY was US \$3.0 billion. ¹¹² Of her total exports, Bangladesh exported 49.29 percent of woven garments, 16.20 percent of knitwear and 39.67 percent of shrimps to the United States. Other than garments, the United States continues to be the most prominent buyer of jute and jute products, frozen food and shrimps. ¹¹³ Country-wise export is shown in the following table:

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ A report prepared by M Shahidul Islam, Director General, Americas and Pacific, CT Wing, Foreign Ministry, Bangladesh; see also, Rehman Sobhan, "The Political Economy of Bangladesh's External Relations," in *The Daily Star* Web Edition, 4 November 2003, pp 1-7; Bruce Vaughn, *CRS Report for Congress*, p CRS-3.

¹¹² Report by M Shahidul Islam, Director General.

¹¹³ "Bangladesh Economic Review 2006," a report prepared by Economic Adviser's Wing, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh, p 73-78.

**Country-Wise Export
(In million US\$)**

Fiscal Year	USA	Germany	UK	France	Belgium	Italy	Netherlands	Canada	Japan	Others	Total
1999-00	2273.76	658.71	499.99	367.37	225.89	248.28	282.77	110.63	97.64	987.16	5752.20
2000-01	2500.42	789.88	594.18	365.99	253.91	295.73	327.96	125.66	107.58	1105.99	6467.30
2001-02	2218.79	681.44	647.96	413.69	211.39	262.31	283.36	109.85	96.13	1061.17	5986.09
2002-03	2155.45	820.72	778.25	418.51	289.48	258.99	277.95	170.26	108.03	1270.80	6548.44
2003-04	1966.58	1298.54	898.21	552.96	326.95	315.93	290.44	284.33	118.16	1550.89	7602.99
2004-05	2418.67	1351.06	944.18	625.51	327.80	369.78	290.92	335.25	122.53	1868.82	8654.52
2005-06	3030.20	1764.11	1048.62	677.50	359.20	425.75	327.40	421.46	137.78	2334.14	10526.16

Source: Export Promotion. Bureau, Bangladesh

The previous table clearly signifies the importance of the United States to Bangladesh in its GDP growth. The balance of trade is tilted in Bangladesh's favour. Its imports from the United States during the last five years (FY 2001-2006) averaged about US \$ 280.00 million, reaching its peak to \$ 333.03 million in FY 2004-2005.¹¹⁴ The following table shows the balance of trade with the United States:

Balance of Trade with the United States

Year (July 1-June 30)	Imports from USA	Exports to USA	Balance	Growth in Imports from USA	Growth in Exports to USA	Growth in Trade Balance
2000-01	289.6	2500	2210.4	17%	17%	17%
2001-02	322.3	2215.5	1893.2	11%	-11%	-14%
2002-03	218.4	2138	1919.6	-32%	-3%	1%
2003-04	248.8	2037	1788.2	14%	-5%	-7%
2004-05	332.9	2508.8	2175.9	34%	23%	22%
2005-06	325.2	2999.4	2674.2	-2%	20%	23%

Source : Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh.

Despite the end of the multi-fiber agreement, it can be seen from the above table that Bangladesh's export to the US market showed considerable increase in 2005-2006. In the unipolar context in terms of post- MFA period, if the United States were to reduce Bangladesh's RMG export quotas and give trade preferences to Sub-Saharan and the Caribbean Countries, this could impose

¹¹⁴ A report prepared by M. Shahidul Islam.

serious economic downturn on Bangladesh.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, if the United States were to give Bangladesh duty and quota free access to their markets, this would double its export of RMG. The MFA quota regime enabled Bangladesh to gradually expand its apparels export from \$ 620 million in 1990 to \$ 5.7 billion in 2004. Zero-tariff market access could result in an immediate \$ 1 billion in Bangladesh's garment exports to the United States.¹¹⁶ Both the government and Bangladeshi diaspora need to create a strong lobby for duty free export to the United States.

The United States is the second largest source of remittance for Bangladesh. In FY 2005-2006, Bangladesh received US \$ 762.07 million from Bangladeshis residing in the United States.¹¹⁷ It marked 15.82% increase over the previous year. It is expected to rise further in the coming years due to excessive demand of skilled and semi-skilled population both in Europe and the United States. The following table shows foreign exchange earnings from remittance inflow from the United States:

Remittance Inflow from the United States

Year (July 1- June 30)	Remittance (in Crore Taka)	Total Remittance (in Crore Taka)	Remittance from USA (in Million US\$)	Total Remittance (in Million US\$)	US Remittance as a % of Total	Value Increase in %
2000-01	1,218.15	10,170.01	181.81	1,517.91	11.98%	3%
2001-02	2,048.24	14,377.03	305.71	2,145.82	14.25%	68%
2002-03	2,652.10	17,728.81	395.83	2,646.09	14.96%	29%
2003-04	2,757.27	19,869.80	411.53	2,965.64	13.88%	4%
2004-05	3,430.30	23,646.97	511.98	3,529.39	14.51%	24%
2005-06	5,105.86	32,274.63	762.07	4,817.11	15.82%	49%

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh

Under globalization, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has registered a strong upswing world wide since the 1980s. FDI is concentrated in the wealth of transnational corporations (TNCs) of the triadic conglomerate, namely, that of the United States, Japan and Europe.¹¹⁸ FDI has proved to be instrumental

¹¹⁵ Rehman Sobhan, "The Political Economy of Bangladesh's External Relations," in *The Daily Star Web Edition*; Sarbjit Sharma, *US-Bangladesh Relations: A Critique*, pp 123-129; Abul Kalam, *Globalisation and Bangladesh in the New Century*, (Palok Publishers: Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2002), pp 95-97.

¹¹⁶ Mustafizur Rahman, "The Price of Free Trade," in *YaleGlobal* (Internet), 29 September 2004, pp 1-5.

¹¹⁷ A report by Mr. Shahidul Islam.

¹¹⁸ Bruno Amoroso, *On Globalisation, Capitalism in the 21st Century*, (Macmillan Press Limited: Great Britain, 1998), pp 52-61.

in development works and forming social capital of the Third World countries (China, Thailand, Brazil, Malaysia, Hungary) as well as the developed ones (United States, Korea, Ireland). But FDI flow in Bangladesh is not encouraging.¹¹⁹ The government should adopt all possible measures to remove bureaucratic hassles, corruption and transaction cost to draw large percentage of global FDI inflow. Thus, creating conducive conditions for the triadic FDI flow gives a scope to Bangladesh government to pursue with the United States to reduce its debt burden. It is worth recounting here that the United States is one of the largest foreign investors in Bangladesh with a total fixed direct investment of nearly \$ 1.4 billion.¹²⁰

Another sector which has generally been mismanaged in Bangladesh but has tremendous beneficiary effect on the economy is the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector. It is said that 21st century belongs to the knowledge-based economy.¹²¹ Under the imperatives of modern globalization process, the country which will wield knowledge to its advantage will also wield power and wealth. The United States is the foremost nation in ICT. ICT has been declared as the thrust sector of Bangladesh economy. What Bangladesh needs is to explore ways and means with the help of the United States to expand its ICT as India has done. It is a long process but actions are needed to be implemented immediately. Development of ICT will also bring the concomitant benefits in education and qualitative change in human resources. Government must continue innovating steps to further expand the trade related to the ICT business with the United States following its opening of ICT Business center at Silicon Valley in Santa Clara, USA in 2002.¹²² Only a vigorous ICT industry at home will help the country pursue

¹¹⁹ Abul Kalam, *Globalisation and Bangladesh in the New Century*, (Palok Publishers: Dhaka, 2002), p 69; *Bangladesh Investment Handbook*, Board of Investment, Bangladesh, pp 20-21.

¹²⁰ A report prepared by M. Shahidul Islam.

¹²¹ Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti-War: Survival at the Dawn of the 21st Century*, (Little, Brown and Company: USA, 1993). Tofflers' thesis is that civilization has passed through three stages. The first stage was agricultural; the second, industrial; and the current third stage is knowledge-dominant. Every stage of civilization is an indication of the ways of creating wealth. Every nation must move abreast with the respective stages of civilization to be dominant in the world polity. The 21st Century will belong to those nations who will respond to the needs of the knowledge-based civilization by providing its citizens access to quality education in computer and information technology, financial and economic management, advanced science, medical care and creative arts.

¹²² It is estimated that by the year 2010, the IT business will draw \$180 billion outside the developed countries and additional \$500 billion business in the developed countries. Bangladesh can hope to earn \$5 billion and \$10 billion respectively from each of these business transactions, if the government provides right kind of policy formulation. The vision must include public and private sector alliance towards submarine linking speedily and to

a strong IT co-operation with the United States to satisfy its dual needs of economic growth and human resource development.

The USAID has formulated a strategy of economic package for Bangladesh for FY 2006-2010 to pursue four objectives: (1) Democracy and human rights: more effective and responsive democratic institutions and practices (funding requirement \$75 million); (2) Economic prosperity: expanded economic opportunities created through capable economic growth (funding requirement \$ 60 million); (3) Investment in human capital: a healthier, better educated and more productive population (funding requirement \$ 190 million); and (4) Improved food security and disaster mitigation, preparedness and relief (funding requirement \$ 250 million). It may be mentioned here that the total debt owed by Bangladesh to the United States is over \$ 783 million; the annual debt serving on this account is more than \$ 50 million. The United States has created a special fund called Millennium Challenge Account to help high performing poor countries. Bangladesh did not qualify because of its failure to reduce corruption.

Threats to economic security of a state emanate both from internal and external sources. Bangladesh's over-dependence on a particular sector, namely, RMG is a challenge to its economic interests where the United States may expect to extract a significant political rent from Bangladesh for the privilege of providing enhanced market access. In its trade with the United States, Bangladesh needs to maximize its gain both in public and private sectors. Bangladesh must also explore diversity of products and other markets for opportunity by opening up trade with other regions and economic blocs such as the South-South cooperation, Africa, South-East Asia, East Asia instead of relying only on North America and EU. Constant engagement with US high officials also makes for creating conducive opportunity to muster economic and financial assistance from the IMF, World Bank, WTO and the UN, where the influence of the United States cannot be ignored. Bangladesh has the potential to achieve economic freedom in a unipolar world if correct policies are formulated and implemented.

Energy

Energy is the most important source in the growth and development of a state. Bangladesh cannot be self-reliant without continuous and adequate

exploit the booming North American and European markets of the software of Wireless Application Protocol (WAP), the latest technology used for the internet connectivity to mobile phones, conversion of Hypertext Mark-up Language (HTML) of web pages into the Wireless Mark-up Languages (WML) of WAP pages (Abul Kalam, *Globalisation and Bangladesh in the New Century*, pp 58-61).

supply of energy which makes poverty eradication and economic development a distant possibility. In order to achieve expected annual economic growth at 7 percent, Bangladesh needs to harness all possible sources of energy, primarily gas, coal and water.¹²³ The United States believes that Bangladesh has large gas deposits but has been reluctant to exploit them.¹²⁴ It is urging Bangladesh to sell gas to India. Contrarily, Bangladeshi experts say that proven reserve of natural gas will be exhausted by 2011 at current rates of consumption. If both proven and probable reserves are computed, the country's gas stock will be exhausted by 2015.¹²⁵ Electricity demand is projected to rise 8%, while 25% do not have access to it.¹²⁶ Arguments in Bangladesh against developing the gas reserves for export have focused on the need to secure 50-year supply of domestic energy requirements before entering the export market. Gas is a delicate issue, and Bangladesh should convince, to its advantage, the United States the importance of gas to its national interests. More so, Bangladesh should pursue US assistance in greater production of energy through renewable as well as non-renewable sources.

Bangladesh was the first country in South Asia to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and reaffirmed American intention to work for the ratification of the treaty throughout the world.¹²⁷ This places Bangladesh in a unique position superior to that of India and Pakistan who have refrained from signing the treaty. This also reiterates Bangladesh's conviction in preventing the proliferation of nuclear stockpile in South Asia, a move that has gained wide US appreciation. Bangladesh must continue to demonstrate vigorously its commitment to anti-nuclear programmes that will ensure enormous respectability to its image as a proponent of world peace in the new world order. Such attitude would help Bangladesh to look for peaceful production and use of nuclear power to address its energy problems.

The idea of establishing a nuclear power plant in Bangladesh is not an absurdity. It was conceived way back in 1961, and companies from the United

¹²³ Muhammad Zamir, "Nuclear Energy and Bangladesh," in *The Daily Star*, July 28, 2007, p 10.

¹²⁴ Bruce Vaughn, "Bangladesh: Background and U.S. Relations," *CRS Report for Congress*, p CRS-11.

¹²⁵ Muhammad Zamir, *The Daily Star*, p 10.

¹²⁶ Bruce Vaughn, *CRS Report for Congress*, p CRS-11.

¹²⁷ US-Bangladesh joint statement of 19 October 2000. During Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Washington, President Clinton and she welcomed the work of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization's Preparatory Organization in establishing a seismic auxiliary station in Chittagong. They welcomed the extension of US-Bangladesh bilateral peaceful uses of Nuclear Energy Agreement. The Prime Minister expressed Bangladesh's interest in participating in the United States' programme to dispose of spent fuel.

States, the United Kingdom, the former Soviet Union, France and Switzerland held discussions at various times. Bangladesh even sought soft loans and signed a framework agreement in 2005 with China. But nothing has come out of these arrangements to tap the potentiality of alternative nuclear energy.¹²⁸ Finding nuclear power as an alternative source to energy crisis involves financial and strategic implications. But Bangladesh needs to be bold and firm. Today, the United Kingdom and France produce 78 percent and 28 percent of power respectively from nuclear energy. China and India are also enhancing their nuclear profile.¹²⁹ As a signatory to Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and strong advocate of peaceful nuclear use, Bangladesh should activate its efforts in discussing about securing nuclear energy with development partners. Bangladesh should be able to translate US concerns into acceptance of Bangladesh's proposal of peaceful civilian use of nuclear energy. The support of the United States, in this issue, will be urgently needed, given the pledge of its strict obedience to all compliances and safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA).

Military and UN Peacekeeping

Military force, although marginalized in the era of economic globalization, has not been rendered obsolete, nor has economic power replaced military power. The Bush doctrine, because of its hegemonic contagion into aspiring regional powers, is relevant to Bangladesh for one implicit reason. The US action by undermining the UN consensus encourages the regional powers to settle disputes with smaller neighbours with military impunity.¹³⁰ The apprehension is not lost on Bangladesh vis-à-vis its strong regional neighbour, India. For obvious reasons, Bangladesh cannot afford to incur huge military expenditure to fulfill the economic challenges of globalization as discussed

¹²⁸ Muhammad Zamir, *The Daily Star*, p 10.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ Mohammad Humayun Kabir, "Strategy: A Bangladesh Perspective," in *Security in the Twenty First Century, A Bangladesh Perspective*, edited by Mufleh R Osmany and Muzaffer Ahmad, (BISS: Dhaka, 2003), pp 32-40. Recalling historical veracity as regards the sovereignty of Bangladesh is very pertinent here. We have seen that during the bipolar world, there was a balance of threat created by the geo-strategic interests of the US and the USSR in South Asia. Any involvement of the Indo-Soviet alliance in Bangladesh's internal affairs was counteracted by the penetration of the US. The US had the imperial design in that its geo-strategic interests were strongly opposed to the infiltration of socialist ideology in the third world. But with the Soviet Union gone as its principal contender and under the impact of globalization, when the US is looking for improving its relation with India, the psychological and implicit threat from the US is no longer in vogue for India. Therefore, a unipolar world in a sense, may conduce to India's perception of dealing with its neighbours satisfactorily, a perception that cannot be wished away perfunctorily.

above.¹³¹ Therefore, Bangladesh must develop a credible deterrence posture as a sovereign state, neglecting which is tantamount to sheer foolhardiness.¹³²

Bangladesh military has been, probably, a great beneficiary of US-Bangladesh relationship by receiving continued military cooperation. In 1991, the US Army launched its largest disaster relief operation in its history and provided valuable education and training to Bangladesh Military that was to become invaluable knowledge to cope effectively with frequent natural disasters in future.¹³³ Cooperation with the US military benefits the Bangladeshi officer corps in a number of ways. The US military is the harbinger of Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). Demands of intellectual pressure on military minds are growing. Military can prove itself extremely useful in non-military affairs by keeping pace with RMA in the knowledge-based imperatives of the 21st century. Exploiting the option of military cooperation with the United States will help create a superior military intellect by combining scientific knowledge with leadership qualities.¹³⁴ US cooperation in training Bangladesh military in modern methods of intelligence gathering, joint operations, and command and control will be instrumental in fighting terrorism that has reared its head as a threat to internal security in Bangladesh.

The highest form of global military interdependence consists in the conception of peacekeeping operations based on original UN charter.¹³⁵ Bangladesh prides itself on being the second largest contributor to the world wide peacekeeping missions. This is an indication of Bangladesh's commitment to world peace. The option of keeping peacekeeping initiatives open confers upon Bangladesh a great prestige to its status as a small state, the respectability of which was clearly recognized when the United Nations

¹³¹ A.K.M. Abdus Sabur, "National Security of Bangladesh: The Traditional Context," in *Security in the Twenty First Century, A Bangladesh Perspective*, edited by Mufleh R Osmany and Muzaffer Ahmad, (BISS: Dhaka, 2003), pp 78-90.

¹³² The asymmetry of military power between Bangladesh and India is so wide that achieving parity with India is out of question. Therefore, the concept of credible deterrence must include the military strategy of total resistance by the nation-in-arms. However, this does not negate the maintenance of a standing military within the economic capability of Bangladesh. Standing military has tremendous importance to the contribution it can make toward world peace and stability through participation in peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping operation is the military actualization of interdependence in globalization.

¹³³ Sarbjit Sharma, *US-Bangladesh Relations: A Critique*, p 129-132.

¹³⁴ Group Captain Mahmud Hussain, *Revolution in Military Affairs*, in *Mirpur Papers*, (DSCSC: Dhaka, December 2007), pp 136-158.

¹³⁵ Chapter 6 and 7 involving articles 33 to 51 of the UN Charter deal with the different aspects of maintaining global peace and security as well as peacekeeping and peace enforcement measures.

decided to establish a peacekeeping institute in Bangladesh as opposed to India or Pakistan.

This positive image as a peacekeeping nation is a committed obligation that can also help Bangladesh widen its involvement in other security networks. Bangladesh's link with other security regimes such as that of Asia Pacific is a scope that broadens its engagement through pursuant national interest in a unipolar international system.

Bangladesh's security needs to be redefined in the changing context of globalism. Bangladesh should no longer confine itself to traditional security concerns. An integrated and comprehensive security approach will entail the use of military forces both in traditional and non-traditional sense. Cooperation with the US military is an effective partnership in capacity building of multi-dimensional professional role in the unipolar 21st century.

Diplomacy

Foreign policy and diplomacy are the mechanisms by which a state handles the security challenges. While foreign policy is a strategy, diplomacy is the art of negotiating with others the terms and conditions of international politics for national interests. A government may have a correct understanding of the dynamics of global politics, a comprehensive appreciation of its economic strategy and a clear perception of its military deterrent credibility, but if it fails in acquiring expertise and skills in projecting these qualifications in the world, it will fail the nation in global competition. The power of diplomacy becomes even more important for a small state like Bangladesh in a unipolar world.

We live in a global power structure circumscribing a kind of complex interdependence. Knowledge of the power structure under the influence of the unipolar America (such as WTO, World Bank, IMF, UN and so on) is the best starting point for interaction with the outside world. So, Bangladesh must give unremitting attention to the bargaining process in which power sources are translated into effective influence of national interests. This will require extraordinary commitment on the part of diplomatic bargaining in the world fora to bring success. So, the traditional concept of diplomacy being the realm of career diplomats needs a change. To deal with the myriad options of global economic opportunities, diplomacy will need to also include members from professional background, such as economists, businessmen, financial experts, engineers, and so on.

For Bangladesh, conscious of the potentialities of globalization in cultivating its overall security needs, both traditional and non-traditional, it must continue pursuing relentlessly a multiple of options: dialogue;

accommodation and cooperation at the bilateral level; regional and sub-regional arrangements; cultivating friendly relations with the outside world; and participation in the international and multilateral organizations.¹³⁶ Whether in a bipolar or a unipolar world, there is still no substitute for diplomacy as the first line of defence. An intellectually brilliant and intuitively wise class of diplomats not only avoids war but also brings to the nation the fruits of economic cooperation on which ultimately rest the peace of its citizens.

Democratization and Civil Society

Francis Fukuyama's famous suggestion that we have reached the end of history and that democracy is a global phenomenon may seem premature. But it is also true that the world's authoritarian regimes are collapsing. Authoritarianism subdues accountability and leaves little for people to aspire to. On the other hand, democracy advances citizens' freedom and equality. For this reason, Tocqueville was correct when he exhorted that any attempt to check democracy would be equal to resisting mankind's collective inevitability.¹³⁷

The United States takes keen interest in the democratization process in Bangladesh. The USAID pursues various programmes to strengthen democratic institutions namely, National Democratic Institute (NDI), International Republican Institute (IRI) and Asia Foundation as well as local NGOs.¹³⁸

In the past, Bangladesh has constantly been afflicted by brittle democracy. So, it must aim at a sustainable democracy. Democracy must be embedded in the local conditions and must result from forces within every realms of society. This does not signify that any scope for outside assistance should be considered negatively. This necessitates Bangladesh to remain engaged with the United States on issues of democracy.

Democracy can also be misused. The real threat to freedom and human rights arises out of the excesses of democratic politics. The solution to this type of democratic practices is sufficient regulatory authority to control special networks of cartels, lobbyists and elites. This necessitates the growth of a strong civil society to act as a balance to pitfalls of democratic system. Civil society can offer guidance to the government through ideas, seminars and collective non-violent protests.

¹³⁶ A.K.M. Abdus Sabur, "National Security of Bangladesh: The Traditional Context," p 96.

¹³⁷ Steven J. Hood, "The Myth of Asian -Style Democracy," in *Asian Survey*, vol.38, No. 9. (Sep.,1998), pp. 853-866.

¹³⁸ A report prepared by M. Shadidul Islam.

In the globalized world, there is an intense movement in creating diverse global organizations. These organizations promote human desire for creating conditions of collective good. They transcend states, communities, nations, religions and so on. Their purpose is to bind mankind in a single thread of normative principles. And all this is happening in a unipolar world where the United States reigns supreme. Creating and exploiting conditions for democratic principles resting upon the strength of a viable civil society will be the most sustained structure of a political unit in a unipolar international system.

5. SAARC VIS-À-VIS UNIPOLARITY

Before we conclude, it will be pertinent to make a pragmatic evaluation of the impact of unipolarity upon South Asia as a region whose cooperative entity is identified as 'SAARC', and how Bangladesh must respond to mutual coexistence and prosperity within the framework of SAARC. This will complete addressing the goals set at the beginning of this paper.

EU was born on the ashes of World War II; ASEAN was created to contain the spread of communism in Asia. Most of the regional cooperation in the world were conceived by the forces outside the region and bore the imprint of US strategic intent in a bipolar world. They satisfied America's global interests. But the creation of SAARC was an exception. Its need arose from within the region and had the distinct feature of purely regional political unit independent of external influence. This unique dimension of SAARC makes it so conceptually illustrious and philosophically abiding.

The overarching US mission is the global 'war on terror'. The rise of religious and political extremism in South Asia is a threat to the peace and security both within and outside the region by having its links with external actors. The United States finds a common ground in cooperation with South Asia in combating terrorism and needs help from the regional countries in striking at the terrorists.¹³⁹ Thus, it is in the interest of the United States that it must maintain a high degree of confidence with South Asia to form a collective security posture against terrorism in the region.

US concern about the nuclear arms race in South Asia is genuine. By keeping up the pressure on both India and Pakistan to check nuclear proliferation, it supplants the intent of the smaller states of the region.¹⁴⁰ The

¹³⁹ Donald Camp, "How the US see the SAARC region," in the *Daily New Nation*, 05 March 2005, p 5.

¹⁴⁰ Aftab Alam, *US Policy Towards South Asia*, (Raj Publications: India, 1998), pp 15 – 40.

United States plans to sell conventional arms both to Pakistan and India.¹⁴¹ Many criticize this US policy. But in a way, military neutrality by the US augurs well for the region by declaring that it wants a military balance to persist in South Asia and too much tilting of US policy towards a particular state may be seen as counter-productive for regional harmony by others in the region. Moreover, American positive interest in the regional security concerns is a confidence-building strategy by the United States in the role of a sole superpower which acts as a counter to too much concentration of power in a single regional state to the detriment of other smaller states.

South Asia is home to world's largest population. It also shares the denigration of being the world's poorest region. The World Bank estimated that in 2001, of the 1.1 billion people living on less than a dollar - the conventional definition of the desperately poor - 428 million people were in South Asia, which was about one-third of the region's total population.¹⁴² But South Asia also abounds in natural and physical resources. Its huge manpower can easily be transformed into vast springs of wealth with proper use. Unipolar world has unfettered South Asia from the chains of taking sides in global power politics and opens up prospects for greater cooperation with each other under globalization without inhibitions enforced by external forces.

South Asia is moving toward economic liberalization. The United States stands to gain from access to such a massive and growing market in South Asia which will be one of the most powerful engines to move '*the invisible hand of global market forces*' in the 21st century. From large economies of India to the smaller ones of Pakistan, Bangladesh and other South Asian countries, the new environment of global interdependence provides the United States and its capitalist passion an opportunity for trade and investment in a region populated by one-fifth of mankind. By any calculation of economic theory, unpredictability of such a vast market for capitalist America is an anathema to its principles of capitalism.

Hence, the foregoing arguments clearly suggest that a stable South Asia is to the advantage of the United States and unipolarity reserves better options for cooperation among the South Asian countries than it was the case during bipolar regime. Unipolarity predicts positive outcome for the region.

If reduction of poverty is taken as the number one priority for transforming South Asia into a healthy and prosperous region under the impetus of MDGs, then the leaders of South Asia must shed regional

¹⁴¹ Brigadier General M Sakhawat Hussain (Retd), "Concern for smaller states," in *The Daily Star*, 16 April 2005.

¹⁴² Aravind Adiga, "The Poor Who Vote," in *The Time International Magazine*, 14 March 2005, p 41.

confrontational politics and translate its vast economic potential into strength. In the promise of *New World Order*, the future of South Asia lies in ensuring economic security of its teeming millions from hunger, crime, disease, unemployment, loss of entitlements and so on. Military competition between India and Pakistan in a unipolar world seems meaningless when the rest of the world is shaping up their destinies through better trade relations and economic alliances. The focus has changed from securing nation-states to that of securing the well-being of mankind. The following words encapsulate the need for recasting South Asian security in the unipolar era:

"Today, however, military competition at the global level has been replaced by a focus on economic development, human rights and regional cooperation. The end of the Cold War has also been accompanied by several trends of economic interaction that provide both opportunities and constraints. Given the promise heralded by the termination of the Cold War, and the focus on economic exchanges, it is appropriate that a fresh look be taken at South Asian security, especially in the context of predominant economic trends. Indeed, a broad spectrum of international-relations theorists argue that increased mutual benefits will enhance international stability, and in the South Asian case, will ameliorate several intra-national security concerns."¹⁴³

To the end of creating a safe and promising South Asia, SAARC is the ideal tool of cooperation. The mandates of cooperation are already in place; what is needed is the genuine conviction and commitment to its principles on the part of the regional countries. Bangladesh marked its indelible impression of commitment to regional peace and prosperity when SAARC was created under its dynamic initiative. General Sunderji captures the importance of SAARC so eloquently in the context of New World Order:

"It is clear that the world is entering a trading era, different from mercantilist age in that military force will not be able to be used quite freely..... SAARC is a readymade organization that is malleable enough to become a vehicle for the economic integration of the region. Indian coal, Pakistani cotton and Bangladeshi jute, for example, can become the bedrock of the cooperative economy, subcontinent-wise, that may be fashioned if there is a political will on all sides."¹⁴⁴

With its strong political and cultural links with Pakistan and India, Bangladesh is in an ideal position to contribute meaningfully through constructive engagement in defusing the tension in the region. The continued

¹⁴³ Mohamed Jaleel and Ahmed Shaheed, "Regional Economic Trends: Security Implications for the Maldives," in *Regional Economic Trends and South Asian Security*, edited by Iftekharuzzaman, (UPL: Bangladesh, 1997), p 107.

¹⁴⁴ General Sunderji, "The World Power Structure in Transition from a Quasi Unipolar to a Quasi Multipolar State and the Options of a Middle Power in this Milieu," pp 14-15.

survival of Bangladesh's parliamentary democracy, despite political upheavals, bodes well for Bangladesh's future stability. If Bangladesh can set exemplary steps in establishing a stable political structure at home, and mutually productive relations with both India and Pakistan, then its potential for regional reconciliation will be the greatest achievement in the unipolar world.

Deeper reflection would reveal that the security threats to South Asia largely arise from non-military causes like cross-border movements, terrorism, internal migration, drug and illegal human trafficking, desertification, money-laundering and so on. These threats start with internal complications, and then have their spill over effects across the neighbouring states. The crisis of good governance seriously inhibits both the good will and actions to undertake remedial measures for intra- and inter-state threats. In fact, increased cooperation amongst the security forces of South Asia means their increased utilization for cooperative security in non-traditional military threats. Non-traditional military cooperation can later be expanded to pure military matters; for example, in peacekeeping operations, regional militaries can work together in a troubled spot within South Asia. The other obvious area of cooperation is to bolster regional economies.

Although the United States and China are factors in the security problematique of South Asia, it is upon South Asian countries how much they will allow external influences to intrude upon their own sphere of sovereignty. So long external influence remains dominant, the United States will have interest in explaining regional security in terms of containing an external rising power in the region. But it is for the regional countries to develop mechanism to keep the superpower's undue hegemonic influence at bay. SAARC needs to develop institutions of cooperation in fields of culture, education, civil society, economics, military and so on, where the virtues of soft power underlying the populations of South Asia will be the essence of their regional cooperative and institutional initiatives.¹⁴⁵

How do the future relations between the United States and SAARC weigh? The answer is simple. SAARC was not born out of US conception as many organizations were, particularly during Cold War era. Therefore, US influence on SAARC would at best be marginal as SAARC is principally premised on economic prosperity. Under globalization and in an interdependent world, SAARC is likely to flourish as an organization of common regional hopes and desires in future. SAARC has endless possibilities that every state is well aware of. It is a bold and profound imagination. It may take fifty years or more of trial with destiny to make

¹⁴⁵ Hamid H.Kizilbash, "SAARC: Security Concerns and Regional Cooperation," in *SAARC and the Superpowers*, edited by Zillur R. Khan, (University Press Limited: Dhaka, 1991), pp 117-145; Akmal Hussain, "Recent Global Changes and New Imperatives for SAARC," in *Bangladesh and SAARC*, (Academic Publishers: Dhaka, 1992), pp 217-250; Maj Gen (Retd) Dipankar Banerjee, "An Approach to Comprehensive Security and Cooperative Security in South Asia," in *Security in South Asia*, (Manas Publications: New Delhi, 2000), pp 285-309.

SAARC a structure of expansive and holistic human interdependence. As is said by scholars, "The important thing today [under international system of unipolarity], indeed, at this very moment, is to contribute to the task of creating a culture, an environment, a politics towards that ideal."¹⁴⁶

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper reveals that we are truly living in a unipolar world where the United States reigns supreme. For a small state like Bangladesh, it matters a lot when the foreign policy of a hyperpower reflects a posture of hegemonic stability. Hegemonic stability involves a great power exercising 'compellence' with regard to a weak state to meet its geo-strategic interests. Its relevance under unipolarity is strongly felt with such vehement US Presidential caveat, "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."

The history of Bangladesh has been affected in a number of ways by strong US interests in Bangladesh, both on internal and external issues. The question is: why should Bangladesh invoke so much of US interest? There are basically three reasons for continued US interest in Bangladesh. First, the geo-strategic location of Bangladesh puts it in a unique position. Geographic location of Bangladesh is a subtle bridge between South Asia and Southeast Asia. Bangladesh bestrides world's two rising powers, namely India and China. As a hub between them, Bangladesh offers great potential for future trade prospects to them through access into The Bay of Bengal. Second, America's India imperative makes Bangladesh, as a neighbour, an important factor in regional politics. Bangladesh is also a bridge between the eastern and western parts of India. Therefore, a stable relationship between India and Bangladesh is a factor in the harmonious co-existence of these two physically distant parts of India. Third, a hegemon abhors vacuum for fear of its being filled up by another powerful actor. In South Asia, the rise of India or the influence of China can be negotiated effectively if the United States acts as a balancer by mediating with weaker states of the region. Bangladesh is the most preponderant state in South Asia that holds for the United States an uncertain stake, the pursuance of which calls for continued watchful vigilance. The United States will obviously attempt at reducing Chinese influence in Bangladesh.

In the Bangladesh-US relationship, what is important is the measure of discord and cooperation that underlie the reality of a unipolar world. As we have seen, a hegemon can create conditions for cooperation. But it is also for

¹⁴⁶ Iftekharuzzaman and Imtiaz Ahmed, "The Thing Called SAARC: Beyond Modernist Perspective," in *Bangladesh and SAARC*, edited by Iftekharuzzaman and Imtiaz Ahmed, (Academic Publishers: Dhaka, 1992), pp 1-15. The words within the brackets are mine.

the weaker state to make use of the great power's over-stretched ambition by allowing its own strategic needs to be met in its own terms. While US interest in Bangladesh is strategic, Bangladesh looks towards the United States for economic gains and moral support.

Securing Bangladesh's national interests calls for Bangladesh develop relationship with the United States on the basis of shared values and norms. While Bangladesh develops its strategies for a unipolar environment, it must bear in mind the capabilities and limitations of the United States. Bangladesh's short-term to long-term strategies in engaging the United States must represent foremost the urgency of upholding its own national interests. Bangladesh should make use of America's soft power. In this regard, the government must play a sensible role in discouraging emotionally negative, malignantly reactive and provocatively vituperative statements against the United States.

While Pakistan generates deep anxieties in Washington with the possibility, however remote, of becoming hostage to radical Islam, Bangladesh as yet signifies a moderate Muslim country with progressive outlook. Moreover, recent US-India alliance presupposes a stable Bangladesh for obvious reason of enhancing economic cooperation at tri-lateral level in the region. In the post-bipolar world, Bangladesh's ties with the United States have taken an independent course. This is why US cooperation is more visible in economic and other important areas inspiring strengthening of democratic and civil institutions. As a whole, US policy towards Bangladesh is a positive indication towards seeing a politically stable and economically prosperous state in South Asia. It is heartening to note what the current US Ambassador James F. Moriarty reiterated at a conference organized by Bangladesh Political Science Association. He said that US strategy towards Bangladesh depended on 3-Ds, namely democracy, development and denial of space for terrorism.

US interests in South Asia cannot be simply wished away. But South Asia has to develop its own agenda for regional growth and prosperity. A strong South Asian forum will be able to respond independently to regional economic and security imperatives. With its strong political and cultural links, South Asian countries can greatly benefit by engaging with the United States as a regional unit. It is for the South Asian countries to institute mechanisms and diplomatic panache to keep world's unipolar power within the norms of constructive engagement. Under globalization and in an interdependent world, SAARC holds the promise of being one such forum with endless potentialities for cooperation, confidence-building strategies and mutual trust. Its strength will be the greatest asset for the regional countries in terms of creating a positive structure capable of meeting the implications of unipolarity with positive response.